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THE JEWISH PEOPLE  
PAST AND PRESENT

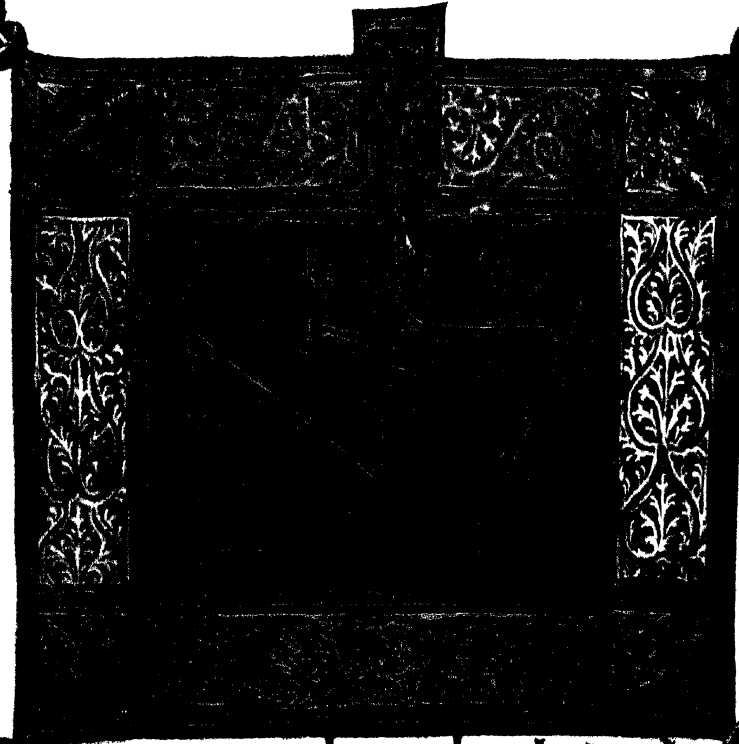




קדוש

ל

שפוך עליהם זעיר ורחוק יופך תשיגם תרחוק. כיון ותשחידם ותפחז  
שור יי"  
מוך חתה יי' יהיו ולך השלם חסור קדשט מוטתו ויפוטו לטוחר  
חתה החל"



לויאל לויאל לשמר חובבו  
על הסדר ועל אמינתו

A PAGE FROM THE DARMSTADT HAGGADAH (15TH CENTURY)

# THE JEWISH PEOPLE

PAST AND  
PRESENT

VOLUME II



JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIC HANDBOOKS  
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## P R E F A C E

**T**HE PRESENT VOLUME, the second in the series *Jewish People—Past and Present*, follows in its structure the over-all pattern of the work as set forth in Volume I. It begins with four studies of the demographic trends and developments among the Jewish populations of the world, and thus is concluded the series of analyses, begun in the first volume, of the statistical, economic and biological aspects of the Jewish people. The next studies deal in particular with one specific socio-economic problem peculiar to the Jews—an almost exclusively urban population—that of their attitude toward agriculture. These articles describe the attempts made toward Jewish mass-settlement on the land.

The presentation of the dynamics of Jewish material life thus concluded, the volume passes on to the analysis of the shifting trends in the spiritual and social life of the Jews. The account of the history of traditional and modern Jewish education in Eastern Europe, the United States, the British Empire, Latin America and Palestine is followed by a number of articles touching upon the very foundations of Jewish upbringing: Jewish morals, the Jewish concept of law, the traditional Jewish way of life.

The remainder of the volume is devoted to a searching examination of the evolution of Jewish social, national and political thought. The late Ben-Adir's study of the national and social philosophies of the Jewish intellectuals and masses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century—philosophies newly arisen under the impact of modern economic and political developments—introduces the reader to the most fundamental problems of political Zionism, Autonomism and Jewish Socialism. There follows an up-to-date chronological table of the Zionist movement, and a body of three comprehensive articles

dealing with the history of the Jewish socialist movement in Russia and Poland until 1919, as well as with that of the Jewish trade union movement in the United States.

Due to lack of space, the articles on the Socialist and Labor movements in the Polish Republic, Palestine and the United States from 1919 to the present will appear in Volume III the publication of which is scheduled for early 1950. This volume will deal mainly with Jewish literature (in Hebrew, Yiddish and other languages) from its inception up to our own day, with the Jewish theater, Jewish art, Jewish music and Jewish dance.

In the task of preparing the present volume, the editors were guided by the central principle formulated in the Preface to Volume I, namely, to provide the most competent and objective presentations possible.

The Editors take pleasure in expressing their grateful appreciation to the many Contributors, Associate Editors and Translators who have made the appearance of this volume possible.

Cordial acknowledgment is also due to the Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO), the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the New York Public Library, the Zionist Archives, the Jewish Agricultural Society, the United Palestine Appeal, the Jewish Labor Committee, the Workmen's Circle, the Jewish Daily Forward, the Joint Distribution Committee, the American Friends of the Hebrew University and Schocken Books for their generous permission to use in this volume the valuable photographic documents in their possession.

THE EDITORS

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# JEWISH POPULATION TRENDS IN EUROPE

(PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II)

Liebman Hersch

## INTRODUCTION

### I. THE COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION

1. Sex Ratio
2. Age Distribution
3. Marital Status

### II. POPULATION TRENDS

1. Marriage
2. Birth Rate
3. Death Rate
4. Causes of Death
5. Natural Increase

## INTRODUCTION

The value of demographic studies of the Jews of Europe for the period culminating in the outbreak of the World War II, seemed to have been totally eclipsed by the overwhelming disaster of 1939-1945 in the course of which 6,000,000 Jews were exterminated. Entire Jewish communities were destroyed and the remaining Jewish population suffered radical dislocation. In the light of this catastrophe such facts as that the Jewish birth rate during the last half century had been steadily declining, or that the Jewish population between the two World Wars had been "aging," would appear to have receded in significance. Nevertheless, the study of the demographic trends and vital statistics of this period not only retains its great historical interest, but its full relevance for the understanding of Jewish demographic problems in the post-war world.

The term "Jewish" as employed in population statistics varies in meaning. In most

countries the term is employed in the denominational sense, denoting adherents of the Jewish religion. In the Soviet Union the term has a national-cultural meaning; in Nazi Germany it referred to origin and to the religion of the individual's parents and grandparents. In addition, there are instances where the mother tongue (Yiddish or Hebrew) provided the criterion. All of these definitions imply varying concepts and entities. For example, in the census of 1921 in Poland the number of persons who registered as belonging to the Jewish nationality was 732,000 less than the number classified as Jews by religion. According to the Polish census of 1931, the number reporting Yiddish or Hebrew as their mother tongue was 381,000 less than the number of adherents of the Jewish religion. Thus, the data regarding the Jewish population under the national or linguistic category are far less objective and less comparable in different countries and periods than statistics referring to members of the Jewish faith. The study of Jewish demography must, therefore, be based primarily on statistics classified by religious groups.

The attempt is often made to compensate for the lack of official information regarding the number of Jews in certain countries by various estimates, based on more or less plausible guess work, and on private or communal inquiries. Whatever method is applied, the value of the figures obtained varies widely in each case, so that it is impossible to generalize as to the reliability of such estimates.

# I. THE COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION

## 1. SEX RATIO

Generally speaking, the ratio of males to females in the Jewish population differs little from that among the total population of a particular country. Although the number of male births is everywhere greater than female, the surplus is more than offset by the excess of the male over the female death rate; the net result is generally a majority of females in the population. Inasmuch as more men than women emigrate, as a rule, in the countries of emigration the surplus of females is particularly large, while the immigration countries are confronted with a shortage of women. This has a direct effect on the ratio of the sexes among both Jews and non-Jews. The difference in the sex ratio in the Jewish and total population of a given country (Table 1) is due to both birth and death rates of the sexes as well as to the extent of the

migration movements and the distribution of the migrants by sex, which are not the same in the respective groups.

In general it may be said that prewar Europe had an excess of females over males, both among Jews and non-Jews, while in the "new" overseas countries the ratio was reversed. The very high ratio of females among Jews in the Ukraine and Byelorussia (White Russia) was due to the emigration of many Jews from these areas to the interior of the Soviet Union. In Russia proper (R.S.F.S.R.), on the contrary, the ratio of females among Jews was considerably lower than in the total population.

In a number of countries, from which relatively more Jews than non-Jews had emigrated, such as certain parts of Poland, Lithuania, etc., we find a higher ratio of females in the Jewish population than in the country as a whole.

In South Africa the Jewish group consists of immigrants of comparatively recent

**TABLE 1**  
**NUMBER OF FEMALES PER 1,000 MALES, JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH**  
**POPULATION, 1919-1939**

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Jews</i>	<i>Non-Jews</i>
Australia.....	1933	933	969
Bulgaria.....	1934	1,032	990
Canada.....	1921	971	940
Chile.....	1920	962	1,012
Czechoslovakia.....	1930	1,033	1,063
Egypt.....	1927	1,031	1,009
Germany.....	1925	1,056	1,067
Greece.....	1928	956	1,018
Hungary.....	1930	1,089	1,042
Latvia.....	1930	1,159	1,144
Lithuania.....	1923	1,087	1,098
Netherlands.....	1919	1,079	1,013
New Zealand.....	1926	935	959
Palestine.....	1931	982	971**
Poland.....	1931	1,087	1,067
South Africa.....	1926	850	957
Sweden.....	1920	897	1,023
Switzerland.....	1930	994	1,077
Turkey:			
European.....	1927	1,164	962
Asiatic.....	1927	1,123	1,089
USSR (Russia).....	1939	1,102	1,087
Byelorussia.....	1939	1,139	1,036
R. S. F. S. R.*.....	1939	1,013	1,096
Ukraine.....	1939	1,160	1,054

\*Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic.

\*\*Moslems.

## JEWISH POPULATION TRENDS IN EUROPE

date, whereas the non-Jewish white population (chiefly Boers) has to a large extent been resident there for generations. Accordingly, in 1926 the deficiency of females among the Jews in that country exceeded that among the non-Jews more than three-fold (150 per 1,000 males among the former, as compared with 43 among the latter). Within the Jewish population, as the ratio of the natives to the foreign-born group rises, the ratio of females to males likewise rises. In 1904 (when almost the entire Jewish population of South Africa consisted of immigrants) there were only 473 females per 1,000 males; in 1911, 687; in 1918, 798; in 1921, 823; in 1926, 850; in 1936, 875.

Generally speaking, the urban population has a higher ratio of females than the rural areas. This is chiefly due to the fact that the towns attract great numbers of women who find employment in domestic service, restaurants, etc. This general phenomenon, however, is less characteristic of the Jewish than of the non-Jewish population, which accounts for the fact that the ratio of females in urban areas is usually lower among Jews than among non-Jews (exceptions to this rule are rare). In 1931 in all Polish towns, with a population of 20,000 or more, there was an average of 1,097 females per 1,000 males among Jews, as against 1,165 per 1,000 among non-Jews.

### 2. AGE DISTRIBUTION

The relative size of the various groups is an important guide for the study of a population. In addition to the birth and death rate, the age distribution is affected by the movement of immigration among whom persons of working age predominate, and they are usually accompanied by relatively few children, and to an even lesser extent by aged persons. Consequently, the population of an area in which large numbers have emigrated, usually has a comparatively low ratio of children in the prime of life. Conversely an immigrant population of recent date comprises a low ratio of children and few aged persons.

Apart from the factor of migration, age distribution is determined chiefly by the rate of births and deaths. The urban population of Western countries are characterized by a constant decline of both the birth and death rate. This trend is paralleled by a decreasing ratio of children, on the one hand, and an increasing ratio of the middle-aged and older groups. In regard to the middle-aged, we may distinguish two periods: in the first, the ratio of young adults is very high; inasmuch as the number of children born during this period is relatively small, the ratio of young adults in the second period becomes correspondingly lower, an "aging" process charac-

**TABLE 2**  
**JEWISH POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, IN PERCENT**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Under 20</i>	<i>20-59</i>	<i>60 and older</i>
Russia, males . . . . .	1897	51.5	42.6	5.9
U. S. S. R., males . . . . .	1926	42.8	49.7	7.5
Russia, females . . . . .	1897	52.3	36.5	11.2
U. S. S. R., females . . . . .	1926	39.7	44.7	15.5
		<i>Under 15</i>	<i>15-59</i>	
Poland . . . . .	1921	33.9	59.3	6.8
Poland . . . . .	1931	29.6	61.8	8.6
Czechoslovakia* . . . . .	1921	32.2	59.1	8.7
Czechoslovakia* . . . . .	1930	28.7	61.4	9.9
Prussia . . . . .	1843	36.9	57.6	6.5
Prussia . . . . .	1933	15.8	68.5	15.7

\*Jews according to nationality.

TABLE 3

**JEWISH POPULATION OF POLAND (1931) AND HUNGARY (1930)  
BY AGE GROUP AND SIZE OF LOCALITY, IN PERCENT**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Under 15</i>	<i>15-59</i>	<i>60 and older</i>
Poland	Villages.....	32.9	57.8	9.4
	Towns with less than 20,000.....	31.1	59.7	9.2
	Towns with more than 20,000.....	27.1	65.1	7.8
	Warsaw.....	26.2	66.6	7.2
Hungary	Villages and small towns.....	22.6	64.9	12.5
	Towns.....	13.7	73.1	13.2
	Budapest.....	12.9	74.0	13.1

istic of the populations of the Western countries, where the urban population sets the example and the village follows suit. The Jewish group, being primarily urban in character, has been "aging" more rapidly than the non-Jewish population, which still resides in rural areas to a considerable extent. Even in the cities, however, the Jewish group is often more "progressive" in this respect than the surrounding non-Jewish population. Table 2 presents data illustrating the trend of the age distribution of the Jewish population from 1843 to 1933, in a number of European countries.

The most recent prewar census figures for Poland (1931) and Hungary (1930) provide a picture of the age groups in the Jewish population in various categories of localities (Table 3).

Apart from the fact that the percentage of children is in inverse ratio to the size

of the locality, the larger urban centers showed a correspondingly high ratio of persons of working age. This was due not only to the lower birth rate, but also to the influx of young adults from the small towns. The relatively low percentage of aged persons in the larger cities is likewise a reflection of the same trend.

Table 4 compares the age distribution of East-European Jewry with that of the West-European communities.

The "Western" communities comprised a progressively lower ratio of children and an inverse ratio of aged persons. A particularly striking illustration of this rule may be seen by comparing the four provinces of Czechoslovakia. In Switzerland, where almost half of the Jewish population consisted of immigrants, the percentage of adults of working age was particularly high, and the ratio of the other age groups correspondingly low.

TABLE 4

**JEWISH POPULATION IN SELECTED COUNTRIES OF EASTERN AND  
WESTERN EUROPE, BY AGE GROUP, IN PERCENT**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Under 15</i>	<i>15-59</i>	<i>60 and older</i>
Poland.....	1931	29.6	61.8	8.6
Lithuania.....	1923	29.4	59.9	10.7
Czechoslovakia.....	1930	24.1	64.2	11.7
Carpato-Ruthenia.....		36.6	55.8	7.6
Slovakia.....		23.9	65.1	11.0
Moravia.....		14.3	70.1	15.6
Bohemia.....		13.1	70.5	16.4
Italy.....	1911	22.2	69.8	8.0
Hungary.....	1930	17.6	69.6	12.9
Prussia.....	1933	15.8	68.6	15.7
Switzerland.....	1930	13.7	78.6	7.7

## JEWISH POPULATION TRENDS IN EUROPE

This difference between "East" and "West" essentially reflects successive stages of a trend which has affected European Jewry in general. Indeed, a few decades ago the age distribution of the Jews in the Western countries showed the "Eastern" pattern to a greater degree than was true of East-European Jewry. On the other hand, during the thirties of the present century, the pattern in the latter area was approaching that of the West-European Jews. The difference between "East" and "West," between village and town or between successive periods, is, moreover, not a specifically Jewish feature; comparable trends among the population at large have been observed.

Comparison of the age distribution of the Jewish and of the total population, on the basis of the most recent census data in prewar Europe, indicates that the former generally represents an "older" group in the respective countries than the latter. As noted previously, the movement of the population from rural to urban localities, as well as the stream of emigration, is one of the factors underlying this difference between the Jewish and the non-Jewish pattern.

Whereas for the non-Jews the East-European towns have been almost exclusively centers receiving additions from the vil-

lages, for the Jews the towns have been a considerable degree also centers of emigration. Accordingly, the Jewish population generally had a somewhat lower ratio of adults and a higher ratio of children than did the non-Jews in the same urban locality. This was not true, however, in places which were not strongly affected by emigration, including rural localities (Poland and Hungary). Here the ratio of children within the Jewish group was generally lower than among the non-Jews. Thus, the Jewish population was not "older" than the non-Jewish of each country as a whole, but of the same towns and villages as well.

In regard to countries, in which the immigrant group formed a higher ratio within the Jewish than within the non-Jewish population, it is clear that the ratio of children was necessarily lower among the former group. This was the pattern of age distribution in all of the overseas countries which received Jewish immigrants (See Table 5.)

It is important to compare the ratio of the age groups under 15 with that of the groups comprising persons of working age (15-59). The following demographic principles may guide us in making this comparison: If the number of children under 15 amounts to about 40% of the number

**TABLE 5**  
**JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH POPULATION IN SELECTED AREAS**  
**OVERSEAS, ACCORDING TO AGE GROUPS**

<i>Country (or Town)</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Under 15</i>	<i>15-59</i>	<i>60 and older</i>
Australia.....{	1933	Jews	20.5	67.0	12.5
	1933	Non-Jews	27.5	62.3	10.2
Johannesburg.....{	1936	Jews*	23.0	68.9	8.1
	1936	Total Pop.	27.4	65.7	6.9
Palestine (males).....{	1931	Jews	33.1	60.7	6.2
	1931	Christians	35.8	57.4	6.8
	1931	Moslems	43.1	50.3	6.6
Palestine (females).....{	1931	Jews	32.1	58.1	9.8
	1931	Christians	33.0	54.9	12.1
	1931	Moslems	40.0	50.6	9.4

\*According to a survey made by the statistical bureau of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.





## JEWISH POPULATION TRENDS IN EUROPE

tracted a large number of immigrants (in Western Europe as well as overseas), the age distribution was particularly unfavorable.

In respect to the ratio of children to adults we note that, with the exception of Russia, which was for so long a country of Jewish mass emigration, and the larger Polish cities, this ratio was everywhere consistently lower among the Jews than in the total population. In other words, the age distribution of the Jewish population indicates that it was virtually increasing to a lesser degree and decreasing to a greater degree than was the case among the non-Jewish population of the same regions.

### 3. MARITAL STATUS

The distribution of the Jewish population according to family status is, on the whole, similar to that of the population at large in the respective countries. There are, nevertheless, certain consistent differences which need to be noted.

In regard to the similarities between the Jewish group and the total population of a given country, the following points should be observed: (1) more than half (51-61% in the Christian countries; 61-68.9% among

the Moslems in Palestine) of all persons years of age and older consisted of married men and women; (2) the ratio of unmarried men (31-41%) was higher than that of women (26-35%); (3) the ratio of widowers (11-15%), on the other hand, was 3-5 times as high as that of widows (3-4%), a parity due both to the greater mortality of the males and to the fact that more of the widowers than widows remarry; (4) among divorced persons (generally a very small percentage of all married persons) the ratio of women was likewise greater than that of men.

As for the differences between the Jewish group and the non-Jewish population, we observe that: (1) the ratio of unmarried persons was higher among Jews than among the surrounding non-Jewish population; (2) the ratio of divorced persons (particularly women) was higher among Jews than in the total urban population, especially in Catholic countries, where the law does not permit divorces; (3) in Poland, where the 1931 census comprised a special category of "non-legalized" couples, the ratio of unregistered marriages was about 15 times as high among the Jews as among non-Jews (5.1 to 0.3% for men; 4

**TABLE 7**  
**FAMILY STATUS OF JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH MALES AND FEMALES**  
**OVER 15 YEARS OF AGE IN SELECTED COUNTRIES, IN PERCENT**

Country	Year	Sex	Group	Single	MARRIED			Widowed	Divorced
					Legal	"Non-legalized"	Total		
Poland	1931	Males	Jews	37.7	53.0	5.1	58.1	3.9	0.3
"	"	"	Non-Jews	36.7	59.0	0.3	59.3	3.8	0.2
"	"	Females	Jews	35.8	47.1	4.5	51.6	11.8	0.8
"	"	"	Non-Jews	31.5	54.0	0.3	54.3	13.9	0.3
Czechoslovakia	1930	Males	Jews	41.5	53.8	—	—	3.8	0.8
"	"	"	Non-Jews	36.3	58.7	—	—	4.3	0.7
"	"	Females	Jews	33.0	51.3	—	—	14.4	1.3
"	"	"	Non-Jews	30.5	54.5	—	—	14.1	0.9
Hungary	1930	Males	Jews	37.0	58.2	—	—	3.6	1.2
"	"	"	Non-Jews	33.9	61.3	—	—	4.2	0.6
"	"	Females	Jews	29.6	52.4	—	—	15.8	2.2
"	"	"	Non-Jews	26.2	58.1	—	—	14.6	1.1
Palestine	1931	Males	Jews	35.7	61.4	—	—	2.4	0.5
"	"	"	Mohammedans	31.5	65.0	—	—	3.1	0.4
"	"	Females	Jews	23.9	61.1	—	—	14.0	1.0
"	"	"	Mohammedans	11.7	68.9	—	—	18.6	0.8

to 0.3% for women). This, however, signifies only that many Jewish couples were content with a religious marriage and did not take the trouble to register the event with the secular authorities.

The fact that the Jews had a higher ratio of unmarried persons of both sexes may be attributed primarily to two factors: (1) the vast majority of Jews live in urban localities, and the ratio of unmarried persons is generally larger in the urban than in the rural population; (2) as a rule, minority groups, which practice endogamy, have a particularly high ratio of unmarried persons, because of the relative difficulty of finding a mate within the group. This difficulty is naturally more serious among Jews scattered in rural areas, or living in countries with a small Jewish population, and accounts to some extent for the prevalence of intermarriage in the Western countries. The fact that the Jews had a lower ratio of married persons than the non-Jews accounts, in turn, for the lower birth rate among Jews.

## II. POPULATION TRENDS

### 1. MARRIAGE

It is difficult to compare the annual marriage rate among Jews in different countries on account of the varying completeness of the registration figures. On the whole, however, there is reason to conclude that the rate was rather lower in the West than in Eastern Europe. Inasmuch as the women outnumbered the men in the Jewish population, the ratio of unmarried women was naturally higher.

The marriage rate showed no declining trend either among Jews or non-Jews. In almost all countries, however, the ratio of married persons was lower among the former, and this difference was more marked in the West than in Eastern Europe. The lower Jewish ratio stood in contrast to the fact that the ratio of adults among Jews was higher than among non-Jews. The difference is particularly striking when one compares the Jewish group with the non-Jewish population in respect

to the ratio of married to unmarried persons 15 years of age and older. This situation has a direct bearing on the relatively low Jewish birth rate.

There are, moreover, certain significant facts to be noted in regard to age at marriage. The statistics for Poland may be cited as exemplifying the tendency among Jews to marry relatively late in life. Among the men in that country, who married in 1927-30, about 42% of the total were under 25, whereas among the Jews the ratio was no higher than about 22%. Conversely, the ratio of men marrying at the age of 30 or older was 22% of the total, as compared with 38% of the Jewish group. Similarly, in regard to women, two-thirds (66%) of all who married in 1927-30 were under the age of 25, as against 38% of the Jewish group. The ratio of Jewish women marrying at the age of 30 and older (26%) was twice the corresponding ratio among all women (13%) who married during the same 4-year period. In this respect the contrast was greatest between the Jews on the one hand, and the Orthodox and Greek-Catholics or Uniats, the Russian, Ruthenian and Ukrainian nationalities, on the other. The difference between the ratios among Jews and Catholics (Poles and Lithuanians) was also very great, and considerably less between the Jewish and the Protestant (Germans) ratio.

Analysis of the data on age at marriage referring to the city population alone, corroborates the difference between the Jewish and non-Jewish population pointed out above. In Warsaw, during 1929-35, 19% of all Jewish men who married were under 25, as against 32% of the non-Jews; the corresponding ratios for women were 32% and 52%, respectively. Conversely, the ratio of men 30 years of age and older was 30% of the non-Jews and 41% of the Jews; the corresponding ratios for women were 22% and 31%, respectively. A similar situation prevailed in Budapest (1929-1932).

To a considerable extent the tendency to defer marriage reflected the social and economic structure of the Jewish population,

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among whom the bourgeoisie, the lower middle, and the professional classes were relatively more numerous, and lower-class workers less numerous than among the non-Jews in the same cities, for the average age at marriage in the working class is in general lower than that of the rest of the urban population. This is illustrated by the figures available for the city of Budapest (1926-30 and 1929), which classify the persons entering into marriage by socio-economic category as well as by religion. According to these data, the age at marriage of Jewish and non-Jewish workers differed considerably less than was indicated by a comparison of the two groups without regard to social status, or by a comparison of Jews with non-Jews in the middle-class category.

The dissimilar socio-economic distribution is, nevertheless, only a partial explanation of the difference in age at marriage, and does not account for the disparity in this respect which was to be found between Jews and non-Jews within the same classification. The Budapest figures indicate that 39.9% of the non-Jewish male workers were under 25 at the time of marriage, as against 26.1% of the Jewish male workers whose marriages occurred during the same period; the corresponding ratios for those in the middle class were 23.1 and 14.1%, respectively. As for those 30 years of age and older at the time of marriage, the ratios were 34% of the non-Jewish and 38.1% of the Jewish workers, and within the middle

class 42.8% and 55%, respectively. In these categories, the ratio of Jews marrying at an early age was lower than that of the non-Jews in the same classification.

In view of the well-known rule regarding the greater fertility of younger couples, the effect of the tendency among Jews to marry at a relatively late age has a self-evident effect on the birth rate of the Jewish population.

### 2. BIRTH RATE

For thousands of years the Jews have been reputed to be a particularly fertile people. It is impossible to say to what extent this reputation was justified in the past. It may have been based in the past as in the present, on the fact that child mortality was lower among the Jews, that Jewish children seemed to be relatively more numerous than non-Jewish children. In the period between the two World Wars, at any rate, the "extraordinary Jewish fertility" was, as we shall presently see, merely one of the numerous myths about Jews.

It is impossible to ascertain the exact number of births among the Jewish population of the world. On the strength of the available data and acceptable estimates, we may assume that the number of live births in the early thirties amounted to some 320,000, or between 300,000 and 350,000. Compared with a total Jewish population of some 16,500,000 (in 1939), this meant a birth rate of barely 20 per 1000. There was

**TABLE 8**  
**ANNUAL NUMBER OF LIVE BIRTHS PER 1,000**  
**JEWISH POPULATION IN SELECTED COUNTRIES**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Births</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Births</i>
Bulgaria.....	1933-36	16.9	Lithuania.....	1927	17.1
Czechoslovakia.....	1928-33	18.7	Lithuania.....	1935-37	12.0
Carpatho-Ruthenia....	1927	33.6	Palestine.....	1931-35	30.3
Slovakia.....	1927	18.4	Poland*.....	1931-36	19.3
Bohemia.....	1927	8.3	Prussia.....	1927	11.1
Moravia.....	1927	7.7	Romania.....	1927	17.2
Hungary.....	1931-36	11.2	Tunisia.....	1923-27	33.2
Latvia.....	1927	17.3	U.S.S.R.....	1926	24.6

\*Figures in this and the following tables refer to total registered births, known to be incomplete.

however, a pronounced difference between the rate in Eastern Europe and that in the "West"; in the latter countries the birth rate was considerably lower, as is shown by Table 8.

The figures given in Table 8 cannot pretend to be complete, although they are based on official returns. Thus, the head of the General Statistical Office of Poland expressed the opinion that the Jewish birth rate was much higher than was indicated by official figures, and the total recorded in Rumania also appears problematic. On the whole, however, Table 8 gives some idea of the difference between "East" and "West." As was pointed out above, in connection with the age distribution of the Jewish population, the difference in birth rate between East and West is in essence a difference between two successive stages of development. *Among the Jews, as in the Western world at large, the birth rate is continually declining.* Table 9 gives us an idea of the downward trend of the Jewish

birth rate in various countries during the last two generations.

The birth rate declined steadily in all countries for which data are available. In this respect one "Eastern" country after another approached the "Western" pattern. The former countries show what the situation was in the latter earlier, and the latter, in turn, demonstrate without question the trend of the near future in Eastern Europe. In the course of thousands of years mankind had an annual birth rate of 40-50 per 1,000 inhabitants, but within two generations a sharp decline in the Western countries has brought the birth rate closer to zero than to its former level. One of the most profound revolutions in human history, this decline in the rate of reproduction took place within a very short time and has continued its course. Far from forming an exception to this trend, *for a considerable time the Jews in the Western countries have had a much lower birth rate than the non-Jewish population.*

TABLE 9  
ANNUAL NUMBER OF LIVE BIRTHS PER 1,000 JEWISH  
POPULATION IN SELECTED COUNTRIES AND PERIODS

<i>Period</i>	<i>Prussia</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Galicia</i>	<i>Romania</i>	<i>Bulgaria</i>
1876-1880	31.7	—	—	—	—
1881-1885	—	36.8	—	46.8	—
1886-1890	23.9	—	—	—	—
1891-1895	—	35.6	—	43.2	37.6
1896-1900	20.4	34.6	40.4	40.1	—
1901-1905	18.5	31.4	37.6 <sup>a</sup>	32.6	—
1906-1910	17.0	28.6	34.3	29.6	33.8
1911-1914	15.1	26.3	Poland	26.6	30.8 <sup>a</sup>
1921-1925	14.4	15.2		22.4	—
1926-1930	11.5 <sup>a</sup>	12.9	19.5	17.7 <sup>a</sup>	22.2 <sup>a</sup>
1931-1935	6.1	11.2	19.3	—	16.9 <sup>b</sup>
1936	—	11.1	19.3	—	—
	<i>European Russia</i>	<i>Lithuania</i>	<i>Latvia</i>	<i>Czechoslovakia</i>	<i>Palestine</i>
1896-1897	35.9	—	—	—	—
1900-1904	34.4	—	—	—	—
1922-1925	<i>Soviet Union</i>	—	18.8 <sup>c</sup>	21.4	34.8
1926-1930	24.1 <sup>d</sup>	16.5 <sup>e</sup>	17.5 <sup>b</sup>	19.7	34.3
1931-1935	—	12.0 <sup>b</sup>	—	17.9 <sup>d</sup>	30.3

<sup>a</sup> 1901-1904<sup>a</sup> 1909-1912<sup>a</sup> 1926-1927<sup>a</sup> 1925-1928<sup>a</sup> 1933-1936<sup>a</sup> 1924-1925<sup>a</sup> 1926<sup>a</sup> 1925-1927<sup>b</sup> 1935-1937<sup>b</sup> 1931-1933

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TABLE 10

ANNUAL NUMBER OF LIVE BIRTHS PER 1,000 JEWISH  
AND NON-JEWISH POPULATION IN SELECTED CITIES

City	Period	BIRTHS		City	Period	BIRTHS		
		Jews	Non-Jews			Jews	NON-JEWS	
							Cath-olics	Pro-tes-tant
Berlin	1851-60	28.3	34.6	Budapest	1896-1900	30.0	36.9	33.5
	1881-90	22.0	34.8*		1911-1914	18.9	27.9	29.5
	1901-10	16.0	24.4*		1921-25	12.3	20.6	22.5
	1911-14	13.6	19.9*		1931-34	7.8	17.5	18.5
	1921-23	10.4	12.2*					
Vienna	1880	28.1	39.9*	Lwow	1901-02	38.2	41.6*	
	1900	22.2	31.7*		1910-11	28.8	31.0*	
	1911-14	13.4	18.9*		1924	23.4	25.0*	
	1921-23	14.3	15.8*	Warsaw	1900-03	28.6	37.9	
					1909-13	23.9	30.5	
Amsterdam	1899-1900	25.2	30.4*		1925-29	15.4	22.4	
	1908-11	20.2	24.2*		1930-36	13.1	13.7	
	1919-22	19.2	21.7*					
St. Petersburg	1910-13	17.6	27.7*	Polish towns in general	1931-32	18.6	21.0*	
	1920	17.2	21.8*					

\*Refers to total population.

In view of the fact that the lower Jewish birth rate primarily reflects the urban concentration of the Jews, it should be instructive to consider both the Jewish and the non-Jewish rates recorded in certain European cities. (Table 10.)

As one may see from Table 10, the Jewish birth rate was consistently lower than that of the non-Jewish population in the same city. Moreover, as countries become "urbanized," and as the rural and provincial populations move, to an ever-growing extent, to the larger cities, the birth rate of these countries at large declines. This is, however, not the most important cause of the decline of the Jewish and general birth rates. Table 10 shows the rapid decline within the respective cities, a trend which also affected the villages and small towns. The figures for Warsaw are particularly instructive in this respect: both the Jewish and the non-Jewish birth rate declined more than 50% in the course of less than two generations.

The more rapid decline of the birth rate among the Jews is to a certain extent trace-

able to their lower ratio of married persons, and to the tendency to marry at relatively late age. On the other hand, we find a higher ratio of adults in the Jewish than in the non-Jewish population, a circumstance which in theory favors a high birth rate among the former. In order to have a clear idea as to how far the low birth rate among the Jews is or is not dependent upon the distribution of the population according to marital condition and age group, it would be necessary to compare not the respective birth rates but the *fertility rate*, the number of births in relation to the number of *women of child-bearing age* (15 to 50) or preferably, the *legitimate fertility rate*, i.e. the number of legitimate births per 1,000 married women of child-bearing age. A still more exact idea would be obtained if it were possible to study the birth rate by age groups (from 15 to 19 years, from 20 to 24, from 25 to 30, etc.). Unfortunately, we do not possess the statistical data required for the computation of the fertility rates among the Jews. Nevertheless, the information we possess

**TABLE 11**  
**ANNUAL NUMBER OF LIVE BIRTHS PER 1,000 WOMEN**  
**IN AGE GROUP 15-49**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Jewish Population</i>	<i>Total Population</i>
Hungary.....	1931-1935	36.1	81.7
	1936	35.1	75.7
Lithuania.....	1935-1937	43.7	104.9
Czechoslovakia.....	1931-1933	66.0	76.6

gives us some possibility of comparing Jewish with non-Jewish fertility. With reference to Hungary, the available data reveal that only one-sixth of the non-Jewish married women were childless, as compared with one-fourth of the Jewish married women; half of those in the non-Jewish group had three or more children, as against only one-third of the Jewish group.

Data regarding the general fertility rate in the Jewish and in the total population in three European countries, are presented in Table 11.

As we have noted above, the trends of the Jewish and non-Jewish birth rate (and fertility), respectively, within each country have not been parallel. The two chief factors, which seem to be responsible for this, are the respective *stages of the two groups in regard to the birth rate*, and the *social and economic structure of the Jewish population* (especially in the cities). The decline of the birth rate began earlier among the Jews; at first the difference between the Jewish and non-Jewish rate was small, but increased rapidly because of the progressive decline of the Jewish birth rate. At a later stage, when the Jewish birth rate had become very low, its downward trend became less rapid. Consequently, the higher non-Jewish birth rate, which had likewise declined, began to approach the Jewish rate, and the relation between the two rates became somewhat like that of the earlier period.

As far as the social factor is concerned, the birth rate of the Jewish population in a given city varies in inverse ratio to the relative size of the middle-class category, a

rule which also applies to the difference between that rate and the rate of the local non-Jewish population. Conversely, the greater the relative size of the proletarian Jewish group, the higher its birth rate is and the more closely it corresponds to the non-Jewish rate. In Poland, and particularly in Warsaw (Table 10), where the true Jewish birth rate was substantially greater than that indicated by the official statistics, it is very likely that the Jewish was equal to the urban non-Jewish birth rate.

As regards the ratio of male to female births there was no difference between the Jewish and the non-Jewish population. Where complete Jewish statistics are available, the same ratio, 105-106 boys to 100 girls, applied to both. Where (as in Poland) the ratio appears to be different, this was simply due to incomplete records of Jewish births.

*As a rule, Jewish parents were older than non-Jewish parents of newborn children.* This is illustrated by the data regarding Warsaw, presented in Table 12.

Among the non-Jewish population in Warsaw (1929-35) over a third of the legitimate children were born to mothers under 25 years of age, as compared with less than one-fifth of the Jewish children: while fully 43% of the non-Jewish "illegitimate" children were born to mothers under 25, as compared with somewhat more than one-fourth (27%) of the Jewish children ("illegitimate" in the sense that the marriage ceremony was not registered with the civil authorities). Jewish mothers between the ages of 35 and 39 bore almost as many children as those in the age group 20-24

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TABLE 12

PARENTS OF NEWBORN CHILDREN IN WARSAW, BY AGE GROUP  
AND MARITAL CATEGORY, JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH, 1929-1935,  
IN PERCENT

Age Group	LEGITIMATE				ILLEGITIMATE*	
	FATHER		MOTHER		MOTHER	
	Jews	Non-Jews	Jews	Non-Jews	Jews	Non-Jews
Under 20	0.5	0.3	1.3	4.2	3.5	8.2
20-24	10.2	12.8	17.6	30.0	23.5	34.4
25-29	32.2	36.0	33.1	32.7	32.5	26.9
30-34	28.3	26.1	27.6	19.9	23.4	17.1
35-39	17.2	13.0	15.0	9.8	13.2	10.0
40-49	10.2	10.1	5.4	3.4	3.9	3.5
50 and over	1.4	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
			Jews	Non-Jews		
Father and mother under 25.....			6.4	10.3		
Father under 30, mother under 25.....			15.4	27.3		
Father and mother under 30.....			34.8	44.3		

\*Includes married mothers, whose religious marriages were not registered with secular authorities.

(15% and 17.6% of all births, respectively). This contrasted with the corresponding ratios among non-Jewish mothers: those in the age group 20-24 accounted for 3 times the number born to mothers 35-39 years of age (30% and 9.8%, respectively). Only 15% of the Jewish newborn children had fathers under 30 and mothers under 25, as compared with 27% of the non-Jewish children. Among the Jews 20% of the children were born to mothers 35 years of age or older, as compared with 13% of the non-Jewish children.

## 3. DEATH RATE

With reference to the annual mortality of the Jewish population as a whole, we have no precise information concerning all countries, but must rely for the most part on estimates. It may be assumed that in the early thirties of the present century, Jewish deaths totaled about 200,000 annually. Compared with a world Jewish population of 16,500,000 in 1939, this constituted an average rate of 12 per 1,000; this is a very low mortality rate, and is

exceeded by all save the populations of the most progressive nations. The annual mortality among the Jews in various countries during the early 'thirties, is shown in Table 13 in round numbers.

Although the mortality rate of the Jewish population, i.e. the number of deaths per 1,000, varies, of course, with each country, the variations are by no means as great as the differences in the birth rate discussed above. There is no contrast between "East" and "West" as regards the mortality rate as indicated in Table 13.

On the whole it may be said that the annual Jewish mortality rate in the European countries (and in the other Western countries) fluctuated between 10 and 14 per 1,000. The available estimates give the strange impression that the death rate was lower in Eastern Europe than in the Western countries, despite the difference in the general sanitary and health conditions and the cultural and economic status of the population of the respective regions. This paradox is partly explained, however, by the fact that in certain countries, such as



**TABLE 13**  
**ESTIMATED ANNUAL NUMBER OF DEATHS IN JEWISH**  
**POPULATION, ABOUT 1930**

<i>European Countries</i>	<i>Number in Thousands</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Number in Thousands</i>
Poland.....	40	United States.....	48
U.S.S.R.....	35	Canada and Central America.....	2
Romania.....	10.5	South America.....	4
Germany and Austria.....	9*	Palestine.....	4
Hungary.....	6	Iraq, Yemen and other Arab countries...	3.5
Czechoslovakia.....	5	Other Asiatic countries.....	6
Lithuania and Latvia.....	3	Egypt.....	1.5
Great Britain.....	3	Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco.....	8
France.....	2.5	South Africa.....	1
Netherlands.....	1	Other countries in Africa, and Australia..	2
Belgium and Scandinavian area.....	1		
Italy and Switzerland.....	1		
Bulgaria.....	0.5		
Greece, Yugoslavia, Turkey and others..	2.5		
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>Total outside Europe .....</b>	<b>80</b>
		<b>All Countries .....</b>	<b>200</b>

\*Before 1933.

Poland and Romania, the registration of deaths was far from complete; but a more adequate explanation is necessary. Owing to the fact that the decline of both the birth and death rates began much earlier in the West, and dropped to a much lower level, than in the East, the Jewish population in the Western countries comprised a much higher ratio of aged persons, among whom the death rate is inevitably the highest. (Cf. the ratio of persons aged 60 and over in Poland, Prussia and the provinces of Czechoslovakia, in Table 4.) Thus, while the mortality of persons in the same age group was undoubtedly lower among the Western Jews, their unfavorable age distribution was bound to be reflected in a higher mortality rate than among the Jews in certain East-European countries. This is a recent phenomenon, related, as we shall presently see, to the most recent stage of the changing death rate among the Jews of Western Europe. Conversely, Palestine Jewry, with a low ratio in the oldest age groups, had a particularly low average mortality rate.

An idea of the trend of the average annual death rate among the Jews, between 1876 and 1936, is given in Table 14.

Among the Jews, as among other nationalities in the Western world, the death rate declined steadily, a trend which began earlier among the Jews than among the non-Jewish population. The decline of the mortality rate has its natural limits, so that any further decline will proceed at an ever slower rate. Assuming a "stationary" population, with an equal birth and death rate and average span of life of 75 years, every year one in 75 would die, making a death rate of 13.3 per 1,000. In view of the fact that we are as yet very remote from an average life span of 75 years, it may seem strange that the general death rate in certain countries has been considerably less than 13.3. This is due to the fact that, owing to the former high birth rate and continued low mortality, the populations in question comprise an unusually large ratio of young adults, among whom the rate of mortality is very low. In certain countries immigration has contributed toward such a situation. In the course of time; however, the ratio of elderly persons is bound to rise. The decline of the death rate to less than about 13 per 1,000, can therefore be only a temporary stage, after which the rate will cease to decline and

## JEWISH POPULATION TRENDS IN EUROPE

then slowly begin to increase. The "older" the population becomes, the greater the increase in its death rate.

Comparing the trend of the Jewish with the non-Jewish population within the same countries, we arrive at the following conclusion: in both Eastern Europe and in the West, the decline of the death rate as well as of the birth rate among the Jews is the precursor of the later trend shown by the non-Jewish population. This accounts for the disparity between the Jewish and non-Jewish death rates at each successive stage of the world's modern demographic transformation. To this must be added the effect of migration movements: emigration reduces the ratio of young adults, among whom the death rate is very low, while immigration results in a higher ratio of these age groups.

It is accordingly clear why the tempo of the decline of the Jewish death rate has slackened in recent years, and why the rate tended to become stable in the Western countries (in a few instances a rising death rate may be observed). The disparity between the "older" Jewish and the non-Jewish population in this respect tended to disappear; indeed, in certain Western countries the relative position of the two rates

was reversed and the Jewish death rate exceeded the non-Jewish. In Eastern Europe the corresponding changes followed a similar course, although the decline in the death rate began relatively late and thus did not progress quite as far as in the West.

This trend becomes even clearer when we consider the evolution of the death rate in the cities (Table 15).

In the instances where the Jewish death rate was higher than the non-Jewish, it was due to the unfavorable age distribution of the Jewish population. Within the same age group the rates were similar for both Jews and others. The relation of mortality to age in the case of the Jews follows the same curve as in the population at large. The death rate is highest among newborn infants, and while it drops rapidly during the ensuing months, it remains high throughout the first year. Thereafter it declines steadily and reaches its lowest level in the age group 10-15. Then the curve rises very slowly until it reaches the age group 45-50. Beyond the age of 50 the rate of mortality rises with ever-increasing rapidity. The biological law reflected in this curve between the two maximal points applies to all population groups.

We shall dwell here on one aspect of

**TABLE 14**  
**ANNUAL DEATH RATE PER 1,000 JEWISH POPULATION,**  
**BY PERIOD AND COUNTRY**

<i>Period</i>	<i>Prussia</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Galicia</i>	<i>European Russia</i>	<i>Romania</i>	<i>Bulgaria</i>	<i>Czechoslovakia</i>	<i>Palestine</i>
1876-80	17.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1881-85	—	—	29.4 <sup>1</sup>	—	26.0	—	—	—
1886-90	16.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1891-95	—	19.1	—	—	23.5	23.1	—	—
1896-1900	14.2	16.9	20.8	17.6 <sup>2</sup>	21.4	—	—	—
1901-05	14.1	16.7	18.6 <sup>3</sup>	16.2 <sup>4</sup>	21.2	—	—	—
1906-10	13.9	15.2	16.1 <sup>5</sup>	—	17.4	13.7 <sup>6</sup>	—	—
1911-13	13.8	14.6	—	—	16.1 <sup>7</sup>	13.3 <sup>8</sup>	—	—
1921-25	13.3	13.6	<i>Poland</i>	<i>U.S.S.R.</i>	12.6 <sup>9</sup>	—	12.9	13.6 <sup>9</sup>
1926-30	13.9 <sup>10</sup>	13.6	10.5	9.1 <sup>11</sup>	11.6	11.1 <sup>12</sup>	13.2	11.7
1931-35	—	14.2	9.8	—	—	10.2 <sup>13</sup>	13.1 <sup>14</sup>	9.3
1936	—	14.0	10.1	—	—	—	—	—

<sup>1</sup> 1882    <sup>2</sup> 1896-97    <sup>3</sup> 1901-04    <sup>4</sup> 1900-04    <sup>5</sup> 1907 and 1910    <sup>6</sup> 1904 and 1907    <sup>7</sup> 1911-15    <sup>8</sup> 1909-12    <sup>9</sup> 1922-25  
<sup>10</sup> 1926-27    <sup>11</sup> 1926, *partial figure*    <sup>12</sup> 1925-28    <sup>13</sup> 1933-36    <sup>14</sup> 1931-33

**TABLE 15**  
**ANNUAL DEATH RATE PER 1,000 JEWISH AND TOTAL**  
**POPULATION IN SELECTED EUROPEAN CITIES, BY PERIOD**

<i>City</i>	<i>Period</i>	DEATHS		<i>City</i>	<i>Period</i>	DEATHS	
		<i>Jewish</i>	<i>Total</i>			<i>Jewish</i>	<i>Total</i>
Berlin	1831-40	23.6	29.9	Vienna	1880	14.0	28.2
	1871-75	15.3	32.6		1900	12.9	20.7
	1891-1900	15.2	19.3		1901-10	13.9	18.4
	1901-10	13.6	16.2		1911-14	13.6	16.0
	1911-14	13.5	14.5		1921-23	13.1	14.9
	1921-23	11.5	13.4	Amsterdam	1899-1900	12.2	16.7*
	1925	13.9	11.2		1904-11	11.2	13.7*
Frankfort-on-Main	1880	14.5	20.3		1919-22	10.9	11.2*
	1890	13.3	18.6	Budapest	1880-81	19.3	35.7
	1900	11.8	17.2		1910-11	13.4	19.0
	1910	13.8	13.1		1930-31	14.5	15.8
	1911-14	13.2	12.0		1931-34	15.3	15.7
	1926-27	13.2	10.2	Warsaw	1895-99	18.5	23.7*
Hamburg	1885	17.5	24.7		1909-13	14.2	21.0*
	1890	13.9	25.0		1926-30	10.7	14.8*
	1900	11.6	17.2		1931-35	9.9	11.9*
	1910	11.4	14.7		1936	9.7	11.0*
	1921-25	15.4	10.8				

\*Non-Jewish only.

this curve, the first year of life, or the infant mortality rate. In the past this rate was appallingly high everywhere, even in civilized countries, where between one-fourth to one-third of all infants died in their first year. The progress of medicine, the improvement of public and personal hygiene, the improved social conditions of the masses, the spread of primary education, etc., have caused a remarkable reduction of infant mortality, a trend which is still going on. The rate in the Jewish and the total population of various countries and cities is shown in Table 16.

The data in Table 16 provide a basis for the following observations: (1) the infant mortality rate among the Jews was consistently lower than among the total population; (2) the rate was declining steadily both in the Jewish and non-Jewish population; (3) the Jewish rate of infant mortality varied from one country to another. Here again, the difference between "East" and "West," or between Jews and non-Jews, was primarily the difference between successive stages of development. It is suffi-

cient to compare the Jewish infant mortality rates in a Western area of two successive decades, or to compare a given rate with that of the total population one decade later, in order to find in the West an "Eastern" and among the total population a "Jewish" rate of infant mortality. The fact that in any given period we find a considerably lower Jewish rate, as compared with that of the total population, is usually attributed to the greater care lavished on Jewish children. It is indeed, possible that in the extremely hard struggle for existence, which the Jews had to wage over the centuries, their survival depended to a great extent on the welfare of the children. Children reared by self-sacrificing parents had a better chance to survive, and would tend to transmit that attitude to their own children. This explanation seems plausible, but should not be regarded as more than a hypothesis.

That the rate of infant mortality is governed by factors in addition to the alleged "Jewish" tradition of the parents, is brought out by Table 17.

TABLE 16

ANNUAL RATIO OF INFANT DEATHS (UNDER 1 YEAR) TO NUMBER OF LIVE BIRTHS, JEWISH AND TOTAL POPULATION, IN PERCENT

Country	Period	RATIO		
		Jewish	Total	
Russia.....	1900-04	11.9	25.4	
St. Petersburg.....	1900-04	10.9	26.0	
U.S.S.R.....	1926	5.7	17.4	
Leningrad.....	1922-24	7.8	17.8	
Poland				
a. Towns with more than 25,000.....	1927	9.3	14.4	
b. Towns with less than 25,000.....	1927	6.3	12.9	
c. Villages.....	1927	6.0	15.4	
d. Southern provinces.....	1927	9.7	17.7	
e. Central provinces.....	1927	6.6	14.5	
f. Eastern provinces.....	1927	5.2	11.8	
g. Total.....	1927	7.3	15.1	
Total.....	1931-36	4.9	13.8	
h. Warsaw.....	1925	13.2	15.6*	
".....	1926-30	10.4	14.4*	
".....	1931-35	8.9	13.0*	
".....	1936	8.5	12.6*	
Latvia.....	1926-27	3.8	8.9	
Lithuania				
Cities.....	1935-37	5.4	11.2	
Villages.....	1935-37	2.9	12.6	
Total.....	1935-37	4.6	12.4	
Prussia.....	1822-40	12.9	17.4	
City				
Frankfort-on-Main.....	1900-05	8.4	15.9*	
".....	1911-14	4.4	10.8*	
".....	1925-27	3.3	7.0	
Amsterdam.....	1901-05	9.2	12.5*	
".....	1906-10	7.2	9.2*	
".....	1911-13	5.7	7.5*	
Budapest.....	1880	15.9	27.1	
".....	1910	8.8	14.7	
".....	1930	6.3	11.4	
		Jewish	Moslem	Christian
Palestine.....	1922-25	12.3	19.0	14.4
".....	1926-30	9.6	19.3	15.8
".....	1931-35	7.8	16.6	13.6

\*Non-Jewish population only.

As one may see from the figures for Budapest (Table 17), both among the Jewish and non-Jewish population, the rate of infant mortality was about twice as low among middle-class families as among the workers. Within each social category, however, the Jewish rate was considerably lower than the non-Jewish.

#### 4. CAUSES OF DEATH

In no phase of demography are the statistics so inadequate as those pertaining to the

TABLE 17

ANNUAL RATIO OF INFANT MORTALITY (UNDER 1 YEAR) IN BUDAPEST, 1926-30, IN PERCENT

Category	Ratio
Non-Jewish workers.....	15.2
Jewish workers.....	8.5
Non-Jewish middle classes.....	7.1
Jewish middle classes.....	4.9

causes of death. The confusion is even greater in the study of the causes of death among Jews, since it is seldom possible to find statistics which are sufficiently detailed and which may be correlated to the age distribution of the Jewish population. Without such data, the crudest errors can be committed, and it is indeed difficult to find writings on the demography of the Jews that are free from such errors.

It is dangerous to draw far-reaching conclusions from dubious comparisons. The

frequency of a particular cause of death, which occurs only among a certain element of the population, is often computed with regard to the total population, i.e. per 1,000 or 10,000 inhabitants. The method is usually applied when no alternative is available, i.e. in the absence of accurate data concerning the element of the population affected by the factor in question. But the habit often persists even where it would not be difficult to make the required computation. For example, one finds juxta-

TABLE 18  
ANNUAL NUMBER OF DEATHS PER 10,000 JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH  
POPULATION IN WARSAW, 1931 - 1936, BY CAUSE OF DEATH

Cause of Death	RATE PER 10,000		Ratio of Jewish to Non-Jewish rate in Percent
	Jews	Non-Jews	
Diabetes <sup>1</sup> .....	5.8	2.5	234
Prostate <sup>2</sup> , diseases of.....	5.9	3.6	165
Kidneys, diseases of.....	2.5	1.9	132
Respiratory (not including tuberculosis).....	16.9	14.0	121
Heart, diseases of.....	23.9	20.1	119
Nervous system and sense organs (except syphilis), diseases of.....	9.1	7.7	118
Cancer (except cancer of the breast and the female reprod. organs) <sup>3</sup> ..	37.3	32.6	114
Appendicitis.....	1.0	0.9	111
Typhus, typhoid and paratyphoid fever.....	1.1	1.0	110
Arteriosclerosis and other diseases of the circulatory system (except heart diseases) <sup>4</sup> .....	9.1	8.3	109
Hernia and unspecified diseases of the digestive tract.....	2.0	2.3	87
Liver and gall-bladder, diseases of <sup>5</sup> .....	3.1	3.7	85
Pregnancy and childbirth, diseases of (except childbed fever) <sup>6</sup> .....	1.7	2.0	85
Senility <sup>4</sup> .....	33.6	40.1	84
Unspecified contagious diseases.....	0.9	1.1	82
Skin and bone diseases.....	0.8	1.0	80
Venereal and urinary diseases (except prostate) <sup>5</sup> .....	1.2	1.6	78
Congenital debility <sup>6</sup> .....	199.0	263.0	76
Cancer of the breast and of the female reproductive organs <sup>7</sup> .....	8.0	11.3	71
Erysipelas.....	0.4	0.6	66
Violent death (except murder and suicide).....	1.6	2.6	62
Infectious children's diseases <sup>8</sup> .....	9.3	16.0	58
Suicide.....	2.2	4.2	52
Progressive paralysis <sup>6</sup> .....	0.6	1.3	50
Syphilis <sup>5</sup> .....	0.7	1.7	41
Diarrhoea, intestinal trouble (except infantile diarrhoea).....	0.2	0.5	40
Tuberculosis.....	8.2	20.8	39
Influenza.....	0.5	1.3	38
Rheumatism.....	0.05	0.15	33
Murder.....	0.2	0.7	29
Infantile diarrhoea.....	52.5	189.7	28
Childbed fever <sup>8</sup> .....	0.9	3.3	27
Alcoholism.....	0.0	0.3	0
Undetermined and unspecified.....	1.6	4.9	33
All Causes.....	99.7	119.2	84

<sup>1</sup> Per 10,000 persons aged 40 and older, <sup>2</sup> Per 10,000 males aged 50 and older, <sup>3</sup> Per 10,000 females aged 20 to 40, <sup>4</sup> Per 10,000 persons aged 60 and older, <sup>5</sup> Per 10,000 persons aged 30 and older, <sup>6</sup> Per 10,000 infants under 1 year, <sup>7</sup> Per 10,000 females aged 40 and older, <sup>8</sup> Per 10,000 children under 10, <sup>9</sup> Per 10,000 children under 2.

posed such data as the number of deaths from childbed fever, or from disease of the prostate, per 10,000 population. In recording these relative figures no account is taken of the fact that males, aged women and children obviously do not die from childbed fever, and that women and the youth group are not susceptible to afflictions of the prostate. Another error, which is not quite so obvious, but still very considerable, consists, for example, in computing the number of deaths caused by cancer per 10,000, despite the fact that this disease very seldom attacks the young. Two groups in a given population may have exactly the same mortality rate due to the respective causes within each age group and each of the sexes. If, however, differences in age distribution or sex ratio are ignored and the causes of death merely computed as so many per 10,000 inhabitants, the results are bound to be misleading.

With these reservations in mind, let us analyze the scanty information we possess with reference to causes of death among Jews. In view of the limited space, we shall chiefly confine our analysis to Warsaw, which until World War II had the largest Jewish population (over 350,000) in any European city.

As one may see from Table 18, although, in general, the Jewish mortality rate in Warsaw (1931-1936) was lower than that of the non-Jewish population (84 to 100), there were certain diseases which caused a relatively greater number of deaths among Jews than among others. The following group: respiratory diseases (chiefly bronchitis and pneumonia), heart disease and other circulatory conditions, diseases of the nervous system and of the sense-organs, accounted for about 20% more deaths, relatively speaking, among Jews than among non-Jews. For every three non-Jews who succumbed to a disease of the kidneys there were, relatively, four Jewish deaths. Cancer (except cancer of the female organs) likewise was a substantially more frequent cause of death among the Jews in Warsaw.

The greatest disparity was in the category of death from diabetes, which was more than twice as frequent among Jews as among non-Jews. Diseases of the prostate were responsible for five Jewish for every three non-Jewish deaths. Typhoid likewise took a heavier toll; however other infectious diseases among Jews, as we shall presently see, were a less frequent cause of death than among others.

Among the above-mentioned causes of death the prominence of diabetes is observable wherever relevant data are available. In certain areas the mortality from diseases of the prostate is likewise relatively more frequent among Jews; in Amsterdam for example, the figures for the period 1901-1913 show a rate of 6.7 per 10,000 Jewish men aged 50 and older, as compared with 4.2 among the non-Jews. Similarly, the prominence of death from heart disease among Jews seems to be a widespread phenomenon.

There are no conclusive data as to deaths caused by diseases of the brain, the nervous system and the sense organs; the data concerning different areas and periods are often contradictory. These diseases spring from a variety of causes, and this problem would require separate analysis. It is very likely that a more uniform picture would be presented if deaths due to brain conditions and those due to venereal disease and alcoholism were classified separately, since these factors are much less frequent among Jews than among non-Jews. On the other hand, the fact that respiratory diseases caused a higher mortality among Jews in Warsaw, by no means corresponds to the situation elsewhere; in various Western cities deaths from this cause were relatively less numerous among Jews than among non-Jews. Diseases of the respiratory organs are, to a large extent, dependent on physical living conditions. The considerably greater Jewish mortality from this cause in Warsaw must be regarded, therefore, as a result of the low standard of living—especially the housing conditions—of large masses of Jews in that city.

**TABLE 19**  
**MORTALITY RATE FROM RESPIRATORY DISEASES AMONG**  
**JEWS AND NON-JEWS IN WARSAW**

<i>Period</i>	<i>ANNUAL MORTALITY</i>				<i>Ratio of Jewish to non-Jewish rate in percent</i>
	ABSOLUTE FIGURES		RATE PER 10,000 POPULATION		
	<i>Jews</i>	<i>Non-Jews</i>	<i>Jews</i>	<i>Non-Jews</i>	
1921-26	930	2,005	24.1	25.6	94
1929-30	697	1,483	20.6	19.1	108
1931-32	659	1,365	19.0	16.7	114
1933-34	595	1,044	16.9	12.5	135
1935-36	578	1,088	15.9	12.7	125

Table 19 shows that in Warsaw (1921-1926) deaths caused by respiratory diseases were less frequent among Jews than among non-Jews, but the decline of the mortality rate among the latter proceeded more rapidly than among the former. These figures illustrate one of the characteristic trends in social conditions in Poland after World War I. By 1935-36 the disparity between the Jewish and non-Jewish deaths caused by respiratory diseases was perceptibly smaller than in the preceding years.

The group of causes comprising cancer and other malignant tumors presents a more complicated problem. On the whole, there was no great difference between Jews and non-Jews in deaths due to cancer, es-

pecially when the rate is correlated with the size of the older age groups (40 and older), rather than with the total number in the respective populations. In Warsaw deaths caused by cancer were somewhat more frequent among the Jews, but in other localities they were less frequent, as may be seen from Table 20.

We have classified cases of deaths from cancer of the breast and of the female reproductive organs separately because the figures concerning these types show a great contrast between the Jewish and non-Jewish population.

Table 21 classifies the deaths of women due to these two types of cancer, indicating that the respective Jewish and non-

**TABLE 20**  
**ANNUAL RATE OF DEATH FROM CANCER AND OTHER MALIGNANT**  
**TUMORS PER 10,000 POPULATION IN SELECTED CITIES, BY PERIOD**  
**AND AGE GROUP**

City	Period	Sex	Age Group	Jews	Non-Jews		
					Catholics	Calvinists	Lutherans
Vienna	1901-03	Both	All ages	13.0	12.9	—	10.8
Budapest	1930-31	Both	40 and older	42.5	42.3	42.1	—
Amsterdam	1901-13	Male	30 and older	21.8	29.4		
"	1901-13	Female	30 and older	24.4	26.8		
Rotterdam	1902-14	Male	All Ages	9.0	9.0	9.2	
"	1902-14	Female	All Ages	10.6	9.7	12.3	
Warsaw	1931-36	Both	40 and older	43.0	39.4		
"	1931-36	Both	30 and older	27.3	24.7		

**TABLE 21**  
**ANNUAL RATE OF DEATH FROM CANCER OF THE BREAST AND**  
**REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS PER 10,000 ADULT FEMALE POPULATION,**  
**JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH, IN SELECTED CITIES**

City	Period	Age Group	CANCER OF THE BREAST			CANCER OF THE REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS		
			Jews	Non-Jews	Ratio of Jewish to non-Jewish Rate in %	Jews	Non-Jews	Ratio of Jewish to non-Jewish Rate in %
Warsaw	1931-35	40 and older	3.71	2.67	139	4.29	8.50	50
Budapest	1930-34	40 and older	5.98	3.37	177	9.62	17.33	55
Amsterdam	1901-13	30 and older	3.33	2.44	136	2.61	5.41	48
Rotterdam	1902-14	All Ages	1.47	0.94 <sup>1</sup>	156	0.82	2.38 <sup>1</sup>	34

<sup>1</sup>Refers to Protestants. Among Catholics the rates were: cancer of the breast 1.04; cancer of the reproductive organs 2.28.

Jewish ratios differ in a completely dissimilar sense.

While death caused by cancer of the breast was much more frequent among Jewish women, the contrary was true in regard to cases of the second type (cancer of the uterus and other reproductive organs). This difference, which recurred consistently in the annual statistics, awaits a scientific explanation.

Reference to Table 18 shows that Jews had a considerably lower mortality rate than non-Jews in the following categories: pregnancy and childbirth (85 to 100), particularly childbed fever (27 to 100); venereal and urinary diseases, except diseases of the prostate (78 to 100); syphilis (41 to 100) and progressive paralysis, which is generally a consequence of syphilis (50 to 100); diseases of the skin and bones (80 to 100). In Warsaw no Jewish deaths due to chronic or acute alcoholism were recorded (42 non-Jewish cases) during a 6-year period. The considerably lower rate of infant mortality among the Jews is to be correlated with the infrequency of alcoholism and venereal diseases among them.

The group of children's infectious diseases (measles, scarlet fever, whooping cough and diphtheria) also accounted for much fewer deaths among Jews than among non-Jews (58 to 100). Apart from

typhoid fever, the mortality from infectious diseases was considerably lower among the Jews, similarly in the categories of tuberculosis and diseases of the digestive organs. The Jewish mortality rate from diseases of the digestive organs was also relatively low. Cases of violent death, through accident or murder, were also much less frequent among the Jews (62 and 29 to 100, respectively); in Warsaw, the suicide rate in the Jewish population was half that of the non-Jewish population.

The much lower Jewish mortality rate of tuberculosis cases has long attracted the attention of scholars engaged in the study of Jewish morbidity and mortality. Some investigators (like Fishberg and Sheiniss) attributed this phenomenon to the fact that a thousand years of unhygienic ghetto existence eliminated those elements whose resistance to tuberculosis was inadequate, and the process of natural selection thus resulted in a relatively greater degree of immunity to tuberculosis among the Jewish population. Others (Hoppe, Auerbach) have attributed the lower Jewish mortality rate to the moderation of living habits. Gershon Levin drew attention to the predominance of the dark complexion among the Jews, on the assumption that their pigmentation was an immunizing factor. Still others (like Koralnik), however, contended



that the Jews possess no special immunity to tuberculosis, and attributed the lower mortality rate of such cases to the particular socio-economic structure of the Jewish population.

That there is no absolute biological immunity to tuberculosis among the Jews is evident from the fact that this disease was a fairly important cause of death in all localities (in Warsaw 8% of all Jewish deaths). The great importance of the social and economic factor in respect to the incidence of this disease is well known. In certain cities of Western Europe, the lower rate of death from tuberculosis is partly explained by the favorable position of the Jewish population. But if this were the decisive factor, it would be necessary first to prove that the social and economic position of the Jews was in each instance better than that of the non-Jewish population, which has, however, not been true. If, for example, we take the Polish cities of Warsaw, Lodz, Cracow or Lwow, we find that the Jewish position was on the whole certainly not favorable enough to explain the great disparity in the respective rates of death due to this disease.

The data regarding Budapest are highly instructive. Within the workers' category, in 1929, deaths caused by tuberculosis were equivalent to a rate of 40.4 per 10,000 population among non-Jews, and 26.2 among Jews. The corresponding rates for the middle-class category (1926-30) were considerably lower, namely, 11.3 and 10.4 among non-Jews and Jews, respectively. Thus, while social status was undoubtedly a vital factor underlying the disparity between the workers' and middle-class rates, in each category the Jewish rate was lower than the non-Jewish.

The Jewish suicide rate was considerably lower than the non-Jewish in the majority of cities for which data are available. Where there are exceptions they need occasion no surprise, since, as a rule, there are more suicides among the classes engaged in commerce than among other urban groups. In view of the concentration of the Jewish urban population in commerce, it is remarkable that the Jewish suicide rate should as a rule remain lower than that of the non-Jews in the same cities.

Death by murder, a relatively small phase of the mortality rate, was still much less

**TABLE 22**  
**ESTIMATED ANNUAL EXCESS OF BIRTHS OVER DEATHS AMONG**  
**JEWS, ABOUT 1930**

<i>European Countries</i>	<i>Number in Thousands</i>	<i>Other Countries</i>	<i>Number in Thousands</i>
Poland.....	+40	United States.....	+ 22
U.S.S.R.....	+32	Canada and Central America.....	+ 1
Romania.....	+ 6.5	South America.....	+ 1
Czechoslovakia.....	+ 1	Palestine.....	+ 6
Germany and Austria*.....	- 3	Iraq, Syria, Yemen and other Arab countries.....	+ 1.5
Hungary.....	- 1	Other Asiatic countries.....	+ 4
Lithuania and Latvia.....	0	Egypt.....	+ 0.5
Great Britain.....	+ 0.5	Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco.....	+ 4
France.....	0	South Africa.....	0
Netherlands.....	+ 1	Australia.....	0
Bulgaria.....	+ 0.5		
Italy and Switzerland.....	0		
Belgium and Scandinavian area.....	0		
Greece, Yugoslavia and others.....	+ 2.5		
<b>Total in Europe.....</b>	<b>+80</b>	<b>Total outside of Europe.....</b>	<b>+ 40</b>
		<b>All Countries.....</b>	<b>+120</b>

\*Before 1933. (+) Excess of births; (-) excess of deaths.

frequent in the Jewish population (20 to 100 in Warsaw). This was due to the fact that in the larger communities Jews associate for the most part with other Jews, and instances of murder within that group are relatively far less numerous than in the non-Jewish population.

#### 5. NATURAL INCREASE

If we subtract the estimated annual number of deaths among Jews in all countries from the estimated annual number of births, we obtain an annual increase of 120,200 births, during the early thirties of the present century. In a population, which in 1939 totalled 16,500,000, this means an annual rate of natural increase of about 7 per 1,000 (Table 22).

Two-thirds of the natural increase of the Jewish population may be assigned to Europe and one-third to the other continents. Polish Jewry alone accounted for about one-third of the total annual increase and one-half of the increase of the European Jewish population. The Western European Jewish population showed little or no natural increase. Indeed, in certain Western European countries, especially Germany, the annual number of Jewish deaths considerably exceeded the number of births, even before 1933.

Table 23 shows the trend of the natural increase of the Jewish population in various European countries between 1876 and 1936. It shows that the rate of increase per annum of 7 per 1,000 was much lower than that at the turn of the century and of the preceding generation. The world Jewish population grew at a steadily declining rate.

The rapid decline of the rate of natural increase of the Jewish population corresponds to the trend prevailing in all Western countries.

The rate of natural increase of Palestine Jewry deserves special attention (see following article on Palestine).

The excess of births over deaths conveys only a superficial idea of the reproductive capacity of the population and of its potential future natural increase. From the viewpoint of the future growth of the population, the death of each aged person is obviously not to be correlated with each child born in the same year. In order to estimate the future trend of the population in terms of reproductive capacity, one must determine the ratio of female births to the number of women of child-bearing age. If the number of newborn children in a given year is such that when they reach the age of reproduction, their number will be equal to

TABLE 23  
ANNUAL RATE OF NATURAL INCREASE AMONG JEWS IN SELECTED  
COUNTRIES, PER 1,000 POPULATION, 1876-1936

<i>Period</i>	<i>Prussia</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Galicia</i>	<i>European Russia</i>	<i>Romania</i>	<i>Bulgaria</i>	<i>Czechoslovakia</i>	<i>Palestine</i>
1876-80	14.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1881-85	—	—	—	—	20.2	—	—	—
1886-90	7.9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1891-95	—	16.5	—	—	19.7	14.5	—	—
1896-1900	6.2	17.7	19.6	18.3 <sup>1</sup>	18.7	—	—	—
1901-05	4.4	14.7	19.0 <sup>2</sup>	18.2 <sup>3</sup>	11.4	—	—	—
1906-10	3.1	13.4	18.2 <sup>4</sup>	—	12.2	20.1	—	—
1911-13	1.3	11.7	—	—	10.5	17.5 <sup>5</sup>	—	—
1921-25	1.1	1.6	<i>Poland</i>	<i>U.S.S.R.</i>	9.8	—	8.5	21.2 <sup>10</sup>
1926-30	-2.4 <sup>6</sup>	-0.7	9.0	15.0 <sup>7</sup>	6.1	11.1 <sup>8</sup>	6.5	22.6
1931-35	—	-3.0	9.5	—	—	6.7 <sup>9</sup>	4.8	21.0
1936	—	-2.9	9.2	—	—	—	—	—

<sup>1</sup> 1896-1897

<sup>2</sup> 1901-1904

<sup>3</sup> 1900-1904

<sup>4</sup> 1907 and 1910

<sup>5</sup> 1909-1912

<sup>6</sup> 1926-1927

<sup>7</sup> 1926

<sup>8</sup> 1925-1928

<sup>9</sup> 1933-1936

<sup>10</sup> 1922-1925

(—) Indicates excess of deaths over births.

the reproductive population in the same year, the population will remain stationary. If the ratio of births is higher, in the next generation the persons of reproductive age will be more numerous. If the ratio of births is lower, the reproductive capacity of the population will be lower. In such a situation, even if the fertility rate (the number of births per 1,000 women of child-bearing age) should remain stationary, the number of births per year will nevertheless decline. A population of this description is virtually already in the stage of decline, even if it still has an annual

excess of births over deaths because of a declining death rate.

If we apply these rules to the trend of the Jewish population in the period preceding World War II, we see that only in Carpatho-Ruthenia (114,000 Jews) did the rate of natural increase mark a vigorously increasing population; and only in Poland (3.3 million Jews) was the Jewish population stationary and on the threshold of decline. In all other European countries except the USSR, for which data are not available, the virtual decline had already started before the war.

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# THE JEWISH POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Nathan Goldberg

- I. GROWTH OF THE JEWISH POPULATION
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## I. GROWTH OF THE JEWISH POPULATION

### 1. RATE OF INCREASE

The Jewish population in the United States is estimated at 5 million in a total of over 142 million (3.5%). During the three centuries since the settlement of about 25 Jews in New Amsterdam (1654), the rate of the growth of both the Jewish and total population has fluctuated widely. The increase in the number of Jews was much more rapid throughout the 19th century than in the preceding period, but the outstanding increase occurred between 1880 and World War I.

The principal sources of information on the Jewish population are unofficial surveys and studies of entire communities or of selected groups. Some investigators have used the method of sampling, while others have studied the entire local Jewish population; the results in many instances are merely approximations.

It has been estimated that there were 1,243 Jews in the United States at the time of the first census in 1790. This estimate

was based on a study of typically Jewish names appearing in this census 100 times or more, and indicated that there were no Jews in Philadelphia in 1790, which is not correct. According to other estimates, there were at least 3,000 Jews in the country at that date.

The growth of the Jewish population during the 19th century was due primarily to immigration. About 50,000 German and 25,000 other Jews came to the United States between 1830 and 1870, and 500,000 or 550,000 in the period 1881-1898. They either came with their families or sent for them later. Equally important was the fact that many of the Jewish immigrants were young or middle-aged persons, who usually have a higher birth rate and lower death rate than other age groups. From an estimated total of 6,000 in 1826, American Jewry increased to 50,000 (0.2%) in 1848, 230,000 (0.5%) in 1877, and 938,000 (1.3%) in 1897.

TABLE I.  
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF JEWS  
IN THE UNITED STATES

Year	Number of Jews	Percent Increase	Percent Total Population
1877	230,000	—	0.5
1897	938,000	307.8	1.3
1907	1,777,000	89.4	2.0
1917	3,389,000	90.7	3.3
1927	4,228,000	24.8	3.6
1937	4,771,000	12.8	3.7
1947	5,000,000	4.8	3.5

Of the 1,485,641 Jewish immigrants, who arrived in the period 1899-1914, all but a relatively small number remained in the

country. The Jewish group, moreover, had a larger ratio of women and young persons than had the non-Jewish immigrants, a fact of great demographic importance. The Jewish population, therefore, had higher marriage and birth rates than the other immigrant groups. The fact that some of the Jews lived here under better economic, hygienic, and sanitary conditions than in their countries of origin was likewise reflected in the natural increase of that period.

World War I and the adoption of a policy of restricted immigration drastically reduced the number of Jewish immigrants. The number admitted in the years 1899-1907 or in 1908-1914 was greater than the total of 596,495 Jews, who entered between 1915 and 1943. (Since 1944 the immigration statistics have not classified "Hebrews" separately.)

The drop in immigration and in the birth rate accounts for the decline in the rate of increase of the Jewish population since the First World War. The rate of increase of the population as a whole has also declined and for similar reasons.

## 2. BIRTH RATE

The ratio of children is lower among the Jews than in the total population. In 1889 the former had an annual birth rate of 20.8 per 1,000, or 22% lower than the rate of the American population as a whole. The annual number of births per 1,000 Jewish women, 15-49 years of age, was 72.9, which was 30% less than the ratio for the total. The difference in the birth rate was attributed at that time to the fact that Jews usually married at a later age than others. It was also pointed out that in the country as a whole the annual marriage rate was 9.1 per 1,000, while the Jewish rate was only 7.4.

Furthermore, in 1889 the immigrants had on an average larger families than the American-born Jews. While those who came from Russia had an average of 5.6 children each, and those from Germany 5.2 children each, among American-born Jew-

ish mothers, the average was only 3.6 each. The difference was partly due to the differences in the age of the mothers.

Statistics published by the United States Census Bureau show that in 1940 Jewish mothers, who had come from Russia and Poland and who reported Yiddish as their mother tongue ("the principal language spoken in the home of the person in his earliest childhood"), had on an average fewer children than even the native white population. The average Jewish mother between 45 and 54 years of age had nine-tenths as many children as the average native white mother in the same age group. The birth rate among the former was, however, about 8% higher than among the native-born white mothers living in cities with at least 25,000 inhabitants. The average immigrant Jewish mother under 45 years of age had even fewer children than the average American-born white mother in cities with 25,000 inhabitants or more, in which the bulk of the Jewish population is concentrated.

Equally significant is the fact that the younger Jewish women had a lower birth rate than the older generation. The birth rate of those 55-64 years of age was only 80% of the birth rate of those 65-74; those who were 45-54 years of age had on an average only 62.6% as many children per mother as those 65-74 years old.

The decline in the birth rate of the immigrant Jewish women was, moreover, greater than among the American-born white mothers. In 1940, the native-born women, who were 45-54 years of age and lived in places with at least 25,000 inhabitants, had on an average 82.2% as many children as those 65-74 years old, as against a corresponding ratio of 62.6% in the Jewish group. In the case of those 55-65 years of age, the ratios were 90.7 and 80.2%, respectively.

Among women under 45, living in 1940 in localities of at least 25,000 inhabitants, the percentage of Jewish immigrant women with 5 or more children was smaller than that of the American-born white women

**TABLE 2**  
**BIRTH RATE OF YIDDISH-SPEAKING MOTHERS BORN IN RUSSIA**  
**AND POLAND**

<i>Age Group of Mother</i>	<i>Number of Children per 1000 Mothers</i>	<i>RATIO OF JEWISH BIRTH RATE TO BIRTH RATE OF:</i>	
		<i>American-born White Mothers</i>	<i>American-born White Mothers in Cities*</i>
15-34.....	1,736	83.8	95.6
35-44.....	2,391	77.5	93.3
45-54.....	3,144	89.1	107.7
55-64.....	4,025	104.7	125.0
65-74.....	5,020	121.3	141.4
<b>15-74.....</b>	<b>3,211</b>	<b>106.8</b>	<b>126.0</b>

\*Population of 25,000 or more.

(Table 3). The reverse was true in the case of those 45 years of age or older: almost 50% of the Jewish mothers 65-74 years of age had more than 4 children each, as against 21.75% of the native white group who lived in cities with at least 25,000 inhabitants.

The Jewish group had, however, a smaller percentage of childless wives. Thus, in the case of those 35-44 years of age, the percentage of childless women was 9.4 Jewish and 21.2 (non-Jewish).

The younger generation of Jewish women had smaller families than the older. Thus, 15.3% of those 45-54 and 49.7% of

those 65-74 years of age had more than 4 children each. Childlessness was also more prevalent among the younger Jewish women: 6.4% of those in the age group 45-54, as against 2.9% of those 65-74 years of age had no children.

According to findings of various population studies, American-born Jewish women have even smaller families than Jewish immigrant women. In 1938, native-born Jewish women 35-39 years of age, in New London and Norwich, Conn., had on an average 89.5% as many children per married woman as immigrant Jewish women in the same age group. In the case of Passaic, N.J.,

**TABLE 3**  
**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES IN THE U. S., 1940,**  
**BY AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER MOTHER**

<i>Age Group of Mothers</i>	<i>JEWISH IMMIGRANT MOTHERS</i>						
	<i>None</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5-6</i>	<i>7 or More</i>
15-34.....	22.80	34.42	31.35	9.41	1.44	0.59	—
35-44.....	9.44	17.15	38.82	22.59	8.36	3.11	0.54
45-54.....	6.40	10.80	25.18	25.82	16.52	12.17	3.10
55-64.....	6.02	8.08	14.62	20.01	17.07	22.77	11.43
65-74.....	2.92	5.23	9.86	15.36	16.93	26.44	23.25
<i>Age Group of Mothers</i>	<i>NATIVE WHITE MOTHERS IN CITIES*</i>						
	<i>None</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5-6</i>	<i>7 or More</i>
15-34.....	35.25	33.35	19.11	7.23	2.86	1.74	0.46
35-44.....	21.24	24.12	24.24	13.89	7.45	5.97	3.09
45-54.....	20.37	20.79	22.18	14.79	8.51	8.16	5.20
55-64.....	20.58	18.40	20.16	14.51	9.40	9.61	7.33
65-74.....	17.99	16.39	18.24	15.05	10.57	11.96	9.79

\*Population of 25,000 or more.

the birth rate of the native group was not more than 70.9% of that of the immigrant group in the same age group. In 1938, native-born Jewish couples in Buffalo, who had been married 19 years or more, had on an average only 60% as many children as the immigrant couples in the same category.

In 1941, native-born Jewish women 30-34 years of age in Indianapolis, Ind., had 127 children per 100 women. In the case of the local native white Protestant and Catholic women, the corresponding ratios were 158 and 191, respectively. This group of Jewish families had the same birth rate as the local native white Protestant families whose monthly rental was \$60 and over, and only 8 children more per 100 women than native-born white families of which both parents were college graduates.

Generally speaking, the trend in the Jewish birth rate is correlated with that of the total population in the cities. We may therefore assume that the size of the Jewish family is affected by the same or similar factors as is the birth rate of other ethnic or religious groups. These factors are probably of a psychological and sociological, rather than biological, character.

Among the factors affecting fertility are urbanization, secularization, individualism, and capitalist mentality. There is an inverse correlation between urbanization and the trend in the birth rate; the urban population has fewer children per family than those who live in rural communities. This, in turn, is due to differences in the educational level and social and cultural values. The attitude toward religion is another factor. Persons who are religious-minded are more likely to have large families than secularists. Pleasure-seeking individuals tend to have fewer children than those who have a positive attitude toward religious sanctions. There is also an inverse correlation between the educational level and the size of the family.

It is perhaps no accident that an individualistic society has a lower birth rate than other types of society. Those who live

in the former type not infrequently find that the rearing of large families is not in the best interest of their children and often necessitates a lowering of their own standards of living. Moreover, the parents in individual-centered societies generally have a greater sense of responsibility toward their children.

There is also an inverse correlation between the striving for social advancement and for higher social status and the trend in the birth rate. This spirit is more characteristic of present-day capitalist society than of any other culture.

The fact that the Jews have a lower birth rate than the non-Jewish population suggests that there are special factors which affect their fertility. It is quite possible that the attitude of the outside world accounts to a certain extent for the lower Jewish birth rate. Discrimination means insecurity. Persons who face discrimination therefore tend to work harder, try to excel others, and are more likely to think in terms of the future than members of less insecure groups.

The attitude toward Jews, whether real or imaginary, is reflected in the marital and birth statistics in more than one way. The belief that Jews suffer from discrimination probably accounts for the fact that they strive more intensely for economic independence and security. They therefore try to prepare themselves for the future. A relatively high ratio of the Jewish youth attend college; some of the young men and women become self-employed professionals, while the others become semi-professionals or skilled workers or enter the world of business. The net result is that they generally marry at a later age than do other young men and women.

Moreover, those who marry limit the size of their families with a view to maintaining their socio-economic position or to ensuring considerable freedom in their striving for economic security and higher social status. While no effort has yet been made to compare the degree of responsibility toward children in the Jewish with

the non-Jewish population, the low Jewish birth rate suggests that the sense of responsibility is greater among Jews than among a number of other groups in the United States.

Equally important is the fact that Jewish children are generally dependent for a longer period upon their parents than the non-Jewish children are. In the absence of fair and equal opportunities, Jews who apply for a job or position are in many instances expected to be above par. They are expected to have a better education and training and more experience. Thus, discrimination tends to prolong the period of dependence of Jewish children on their parents. This, in turn, means that the responsibilities of Jewish parents are greater and their financial burdens heavier. They therefore more often than others prefer to have small families.

Finally, married couples who are optimistic about their future and have no particular reason to be concerned about the present and future status of their children, usually have larger families than those who are less sanguine. As long as Jews believed that Providence would take care of them and their offspring, a large family was considered a blessing. The present generation is, however, less religious-minded and less optimistic as to the future. This pessimistic outlook and sense of uncertainty have a depressing effect even on Jews who would like to raise families as large as those of their non-Jewish neighbors.

### 3. INTERMARRIAGE

The rate of increase of the Jewish population is also affected by the rising rate of intermarriage. Exogamous families are usually smaller than endogamous families, and the children of many exogamous families are not brought up as Jews. In New York City the number of intermarriages per 100 Jewish marriages between 1908 and 1912 was 0.64 among immigrants, and 4.51 among second-generation American Jews. The present rate of intermarriage has probably risen since 1912, as the ratio of native

to foreign-born Jews has increased. The rate of intermarriage in New Haven, Conn., increased from 1.1% of all Jewish marriages in 1900 to 6.3% in 1940.

Table 4 shows the number of mixed marriages in several cities. It is probable that the number was greater than the total given, for some of those who had intermarried, ceased to have contact with the Jewish community and were therefore not included.

TABLE 4  
INTERMARRIAGE IN SELECTED CITIES

<i>City</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Jewish Families</i>	<i>Number of Mixed Marriages</i>
Dallas, Tex.....	1939	186	12
Duluth, Minn.....	1939	327	58
New London, Conn.	1938	490	27
San Francisco, Cal..	1938	10,110	696
Stamford, Conn....	1938	823	59
Trenton, N. J.....	1937	1,948	27
"X." N. Y.....	1931	613	57

The religious affiliation of 807 "non-support" cases in Chicago, in 1929-1935, was: both parents Jewish—87.9%; Jewish and Protestant—6.9%; Jewish and Catholic—5.2%; a total of 12.1% mixed marriages. In 1939, mixed families constituted 5% of the active cases on the rolls of a Jewish relief agency in a certain city in the Midwest ("Buna").

Intermarriage occurs more frequently in the case of Jewish men than of women, and the non-Jewish spouse is more often a Protestant than a Catholic.

## II. SEX RATIO AND AGE DISTRIBUTION

### 1. SEX RATIO

According to the 1940 census, the ratio of females to males among those reporting Yiddish as their mother tongue was 973 to 1,000. The ratio within the immigrant group was 979 to 1,000 and 968 to 1,000 within the native-born group of foreign or mixed parentage.

As for the other language groups, the ratio of females to males (foreign- and



native-born was 988 to 1,000; there were 1,005 females to 1,000 males among the native-born of foreign or mixed parentage, and 889 to 1,000 among the foreign-born. This is due to the well-established fact that in countries of recent immigration the ratio of males is usually larger than that of females.

Studies of several Jewish communities made in 1937-1939 show an approximately equal ratio of females to males. Among the 96,000 Jews in the cities studied, 50.5% were females. There was, however, a lower ratio of women among the immigrants than among the native Jews; the former had 956 and the latter 1,024 females to 1,000 males.

The ratio of women among Yiddish-speaking immigrants has increased as shown below:

1910 . . .	898 females to 1,000 males
1920 . . .	915 " " " "
1930 . . .	966 " " " "
1940 . . .	979 " " " "

As is shown in the third column of Table 5, the ratio of females to males among Jewish immigrants varies according to country of origin.

TABLE 5

**RATIO OF FEMALES TO 1,000 MALES  
IN THE YIDDISH-SPEAKING  
POPULATION, 1940**

<i>Country of Origin of Immigrants and of Parents of Native-born</i>	<i>Foreign- born and Native</i>	<i>Foreign- born</i>	<i>Native of Foreign or Mixed Parentage</i>
Russia (U.S.S.R.)	978	981	976
Poland.....	936	939	931
Austria.....	1,057	1,082	1,028
Romania.....	950	949	952
Lithuania.....	901	888	918
Hungary.....	1,016	1,168	852
Germany.....	913	1,000	860
Czechoslovakia..	943	791	1,192
Others.....	882	889	867
<b>Average.....</b>	<b>973</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>968</b>

## 2. AGE DISTRIBUTION

The age distribution of a population is an important demographic and social factor. The birth rate generally varies with the ratio of young adults in the population.

Similarly, the death rate varies, among other things, with the ratio of aged persons. The ratio of gainfully-employed persons to dependents also varies with the ratio of adults, as does the demand for certain commodities and services. The age distribution of immigrant groups differs from that of the native-born population. The former usually have at first a high ratio of young and middle-aged persons, and, at a later period, a larger percentage of older persons than the native-born group.

In 1940, the age distribution of persons who reported Yiddish as their mother tongue was not quite the same as that of the groups who reported other foreign languages. Compared with other immigrant groups, the Jews had a relatively larger number of middle-aged persons and a lower ratio of those under 25 years of age as well as of persons 65 years of age and older. The native-born Jews of foreign or mixed parentage had a relatively larger number of persons under 25 but a smaller number 65 years of age and older than non-Jews in the same category. The median age of the Jewish immigrants was 48 years and 5 months, and of their native-born children 26 years and 1 month; in the case of the non-Jewish groups it was 50 years and 7 months, and 29.5 years, respectively. The differences in the age distribution of the immigrants reflect the differences in their ages at the time of their arrival. The Yiddish-speaking groups, who originally had a higher ratio of young persons, comprised in 1940 a relatively large group of middle-aged persons, while the others, who had relatively more middle-aged persons at the time of their arrival, had in 1940 a larger number 65 years of age and older.

Within the Yiddish-speaking group the age distribution of the males was not quite the same as that of the females: 10.5% of the males and 12.8% of the females were 25-34 years of age. 21.3% of the former and 19.5% of the latter were 55-64 years of age. The median age of the foreign-born males was 48 years and 11 months and of the females 47 years and 10 months; in the case

**TABLE 6**  
**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONS REPORTING A FOREIGN**  
**MOTHER TONGUE, 1940, ACCORDING TO AGE GROUP**

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>YIDDISH</i>			<i>OTHERS</i>		
	<i>Foreign-born and Native</i>	<i>Foreign-born</i>	<i>Native of Foreign or Mixed Parentage</i>	<i>Foreign-born and Native</i>	<i>Foreign-born</i>	<i>Native of Foreign or Mixed Parentage</i>
Under 25.....	21.8	2.6	44.8	29.3	4.1	40.6
25-34.....	20.7	11.6	31.5	16.0	9.8	18.8
35-44.....	20.7	24.6	16.2	16.1	19.9	14.4
45-54.....	18.3	28.7	5.8	16.4	26.8	11.8
55-64.....	11.7	20.4	1.2	11.8	20.9	7.7
65 and over.....	6.8	12.1	0.5	10.4	18.5	6.7
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

of their American-born children it was 26 years and 1 month for either sex. The difference in the case of the immigrants is probably due to the fact that men (both among Jews and others) usually marry younger women. The ratio of persons 25-54 years of age among the native-born Yiddish-speaking group of foreign or mixed parentage was 53.3% for the men and 53.5% for the women.

Recent studies of Jewish communities show that Jews already have a slightly lower ratio of children under 5 years of age than the total population (5.1% and 6%, respectively). But the Jewish group has a relatively larger number in the age group 5-19 (6.4% and 6%, respectively), and a smaller number 35 years of age or older (14.4% and 16.1%, respectively). This age distribution reflects to a certain extent the transition from an immigrant to a native-born group.

### III. MORBIDITY, MORTALITY, AND LONGEVITY

#### 1. ORGANIC DISEASES

Certain diseases seem to be more prevalent among Jews than among non-Jewish groups, while the reverse is true in the case of other ailments. These differences are to a certain extent due to differences in the age composition, occupational distribution,

mode and standards of living as well as to some other psychological and social factors.

In New York City, according to a study of 53,148 patients in Jewish hospitals in 1933 (in which 67.5% of all patients were Jewish), and of 408,927 patients in other hospitals, in which only 13.4% were Jewish, the Jewish hospitals had a relatively larger number of the following cases: acute and chronic appendicitis, diabetes mellitus, tonsils and adenoids, non-malignant neoplasms, and hernia. The following disorders were more prevalent among patients in other hospitals: fractures and traumatic conditions, genital tract conditions, heart diseases, vascular disorders, infectious diseases, metabolic and endocrine conditions, tuberculosis and alcoholism. The observed differences were to a certain extent due to the difference in the ratio of Jews among the patients in the two hospital groups. There were no statistically significant differences in the case of the following disorders: ulcers, blood diseases, rheumatism and arthritis, malignant neoplasms, pneumonia, conditions of the gastro-intestinal tract and urological conditions.

#### 2. MENTAL DISORDERS

Among the inmates of hospitals for mental patients, the Jewish ratio is fairly low. Of the 175,206 first admissions to such state hospitals in New York, in the period

July 1, 1929-March 31, 1944, only 12.4% were Jewish. Similarly, only 3.5% of the first admissions to such state hospitals in Massachusetts, in the decade 1929-1938, were reported to be Jews. In both of these states the Jewish population ratio was higher than the percentages given above. While it is quite possible that a relatively large number of Jews afflicted with such disorders are treated in *private* licensed hospitals, it is doubtful whether this would really account for the reported differences, unless we assume that a very high ratio of the inmates in such institutions are Jewish. We may assume that the situation in New York and Massachusetts, which probably comprise over four-tenths of American Jewry, is not an exception in this respect.

The ratio of Jewish women admitted to institutions for the treatment of mental disorders was higher than that of men. The Jewish women constituted 14.1% of all female first admissions in New York, 1929-1944, while the men constituted 10.9% of all males admitted. In Massachusetts, 1929-1938, the corresponding percentages were 5.8 and 3.2. The ratio of females to males admitted to New York State hospitals was 115 to 100 in the case of the Jews, and 86 to 100 in the case of the non-Jews; in Massachusetts the corresponding ratios were 103 and 86.6, respectively, to 100.

Generally speaking, certain functional psychoses are more prevalent among Jews, while certain constitutional disorders are more frequently found among non-Jews. (Table 7.)

In New York, 1929-1944, and in Massachusetts, 1929-1938, alcoholism, cerebral arteriosclerosis, general paralysis, and disorders due to senility were less prevalent, while dementia praecox and manic depressive cases were more prevalent among Jews.

Certain mental disorders were more frequently found among Jewish men than women, namely, alcoholic cases, dementia praecox, and general paralysis. Involuntional melancholia and manic depressive cases were more frequently found among Jewish women.

TABLE 7

**FIRST ADMISSIONS TO NEW YORK<sup>1</sup>  
AND MASSACHUSETTS<sup>2</sup> STATE  
MENTAL HOSPITALS, BY CATEGORY**

Category	JEWS		NON-JEWS	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Alcoholic.....	1.2	0.1	11.1	3.0
Cerebral Arterio- sclerosis.....	17.5	17.8	19.8	18.8
Dementia Praecox..	35.9	30.2	22.3	24.7
General Paralysis..	7.2	1.6	10.1	3.6
Involuntional Melan- cholia.....	1.3	3.2	1.2	3.0
Manic Depressive..	9.2	14.1	5.9	11.1
Senile.....	5.5	10.2	7.9	12.6
Others.....	22.2	22.8	21.7	23.2
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> 1929-44.<sup>2</sup> 1929-38.

### 3. CAUSES OF DEATH

According to the partial data available, there are certain differences in the relative importance of the various causes of death among Jews and others. In 1910, cancer, tuberculosis of the lungs, heart diseases, pneumonia, and Bright's disease were more frequently reported as the cause of death of the native-born in New York State than among the Russian-born population, most of whom were Jewish. In 1925, however, diseases of the heart, cancer, and diabetes were more frequently reported as causes of death among Jews than among others in New York City. Table 8 shows the relative importance of certain causes of death in New York City in 1925.

TABLE 8

**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF  
SELECTED CAUSES OF DEATH,  
NEW YORK CITY, 1925**

Cause	Age Group	PERCENT OF DEATHS	
		Jews	Others
Tuberculosis....	25-34	12.0	23.0
Heart Ailments..	35-44	18.7	14.3
Cancer.....	45-54	18.0	14.5
Pneumonia.....	55-64	8.0	8.7

Table 9 shows the causes of death among Jews and others in New York City in 1931.

TABLE 9  
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF  
CAUSES OF DEATH,  
NEW YORK CITY, 1931

<i>Cause</i>	<i>Jews</i>	<i>Non-Jews</i>
Cancer.....	14.64	10.75
Cardio-arterio-renal disease; apoplexy.....	40.78	37.18
Diseases of the nervous system..	2.91	2.09
Syphilis, locomotor ataxia, gen- eral paresis.....	0.56	0.79
Diseases of the liver.....	1.54	1.79
Pneumonia.....	10.33	14.45
Tuberculosis.....	3.16	7.28
Diabetes.....	4.29	2.45
Suicide.....	1.75	1.22
Others, not including accidents..	20.03	22.00
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The greater prevalence of diabetes among Jews has been attributed to their consumption of starchy foods as well as to greater nervous strain induced by economic and other problems. In 1940, among 327 deaths in Boston due to diabetes mellitus, 70, or approximately 21%, were Jews, as against the Jewish ratio of only about one-tenth in the city's population.

Cancer of certain organs is more prevalent among Jews. Thus, there were 19 per 1,000 Jewish male decedents in New York City in 1931 who had cancer of the male genital organs, while the non-Jews had only 13 per 1,000 male decedents; in the case of cancer of the digestive tract and peritoneum, the rates were 87 and 58 per 1,000 decedents, respectively. In the case of cancer of the respiratory system, the rates were 19 and 8, respectively. Cancer of the buccal cavity was less prevalent among Jews; so was cancer of the female genital organs, 8.7 and 5.5 per 1,000 female decedents; in the case of cancer of the uterus, the rates were 11 and 21 per 1,000 decedents.

As in the case of the population as a whole, the number of Jews who succumb to diseases of the heart is on the increase. Among members of the Workmen's Circle who died in the years 1934-1938, at the age of 63-67, 16.5% were due to heart diseases, as against 17.65% in 1941-1942. In the case

of those who were 68 years of age or older at the time of death, the corresponding percentages were 24 and 31.4. This illustrates the general trend, although the mortality rate of native-born Jews is probably not quite the same as those of the members of the Workmen's Circle, most of whom were immigrants, and whose occupational pattern and mode of living were not quite the same as those of the American-born Jews.

#### 4. LONGEVITY

Jews have a longer span of life than members of non-Jewish groups. They have a lower infant mortality rate as well as a lower death rate in the population under 50 years of age. In 1910, the standardized death rate of male immigrants from Russia in New York State, most of whom were Jews, was 13.1, and of the native-born of native parentage, 13.8. These Russian immigrants had at that time a life expectancy of 53.44 years at the age of 10, while immigrants from Ireland and Germany had a life expectancy of 38.66 and 49.44 years, respectively. Americans of native parentage had a life expectancy of 52.96 years.

In 1931, almost two-thirds (64%) of the Jewish males were 50 years of age or older

TABLE 10  
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF  
DEATHS, NEW YORK CITY, 1931,  
BY AGE GROUP

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>JEWS</i>		<i>NON-JEWS (White)</i>	
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Under 5.....	9.5	9.1	13.7	10.8
5-9.....	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.7
10-14.....	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.2
15-19.....	1.6	1.4	1.9	2.0
20-24.....	1.8	2.3	2.4	3.4
25-29.....	1.6	2.4	2.7	3.6
30-39.....	6.3	6.8	7.9	8.3
40-49.....	12.2	10.2	13.9	11.6
50-59.....	21.1	17.3	18.3	15.6
60-69.....	23.7	24.5	20.0	20.5
70 and over...	19.0	22.9	16.1	21.3
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

at the time of their death, as compared with 54.4% of the non-Jewish whites. Similarly, about 65% of the Jewesses and only 53.4% of the non-Jewish females were at least 50 years old at the time of their death. There was also a lower percentage of children under 5 years of age among the Jew-

ish than among the other decedents. This suggests that the Jews have a longer expectancy of life than their neighbors. The difference in the longevity is probably due to differences in their occupation patterns, mode and standard of living, and to some other social conditions.

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# THE JEWISH POPULATION IN CANADA

Nathan Goldberg

1. Growth of the Jewish Population
2. Birth Rate
3. Intermarriage
4. Marital Status
5. Age Distribution and Sex Ratio
6. Morbidity and Mortality

## 1. GROWTH OF THE JEWISH POPULATION

The number of Jews in Canada increased from 16,131 in 1901 to 170,241 in 1941. The present Jewish population (1947) is estimated at about 175,000.

The rate of increase during these years has not been constant, but has declined since the census of 1921. This is due to the adoption of a policy of restrictive immigration as well as to a decline in the birth rate and to an increase in the death rate.

According to L. Rosenberg, during the period 1901-1921 about 86,000 Jewish immigrants entered and remained in Canada. This accounts for the more rapid growth of the Jewish than the non-Jewish population. In the following decade, the net Jewish immigration totalled 15,800, while during the period 1931-1941 it amounted to only 2,175.

**TABLE 1**  
**GROWTH OF THE JEWISH POPULATION, 1901-1941**

<i>Census Year</i>	<i>NUMBER OF JEWS ACCORDING TO:</i>		<i>PERCENT OF PRECEDING PERIOD</i>		<i>Percent of total Population</i>
	<i>Ethnic Origin</i>	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Jews</i>	<i>Non-Jews</i>	
1901	16,131	16,401	—	—	0.30
1911	75,681	74,564	469.2	133.2	1.05
1921	126,196	125,197	166.7	121.5	1.44
1931	156,726	155,614	124.2	118.0	1.51
1941	170,241	168,367	108.6	110.9	1.48

**TABLE 2**  
**JEWISH BIRTHS**

<i>Period</i>	<i>Total Births</i>	<i>Both Parents Jewish</i>	<i>One or Both Parents Jewish</i>	<i>Jewish Births, Percentage of Total</i>	
				<i>Both Parents Jewish</i>	<i>One or Both Parents Jewish</i>
1926-1930	1,146,914	10,179	10,602	0.89	0.92
1931-1935	1,100,096	10,317	10,908	0.94	0.99
1936-1940	1,098,687	10,251	11,050	0.93	1.01
1941-1943	778,547	7,987	8,615	1.03	1.11

## 2. BIRTH RATE

The Jews have a lower birth rate than the non-Jewish urban population. Between 1931 and 1941 they constituted 1.5% of the Canadian population, but among the children born during that period only 1% were of Jewish and mixed parentage. The declining trend of the Jewish birth rate since 1931 has paralleled that of the total population, but the trend was upward in 1941-43.

The birth rate of an ethnic group is generally correlated with the urbanization, educational level, socio-economic status and religious attitudes of its members. Most of the Canadian Jews live in large cities, which have a relatively low birth rate. Moreover, they have a higher ratio of high school and college graduates, and a higher concentration in the professions and in commerce than the non-Jews; in these categories the birth rate is usually lower than among farmers, factory workers and other groups. There is also an inverse correlation between the secularization of a group and its birth rate.

Jews tend to marry at a later age than others. Thus, in 1941, only 30% of the married Jewish women, under 25 years of age, living in cities with at least 30,000 inhabitants, had married before they were 20, while the corresponding percentage in these centers amongst the non-Jewish population was 46.4%.

Jewish mothers usually have a shorter child-bearing period. For the reasons given above, they generally become mothers at a later age and cease to bear children at an earlier age than mothers in the non-Jewish population.

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF LEGITIMATE BIRTHS ACCORDING TO AGE OF MOTHER, 1936-1943

Age	Jewish Mothers	Other Mothers
Under 20	1.1	5.5
20-24	20.1	26.6
25-29	41.4	29.6
30-34	26.3	20.7
35 and over	11.0	17.6

The ratio of illegitimate births among Jews is considerably lower than in the non-Jewish population. Of the children born to Jewish mothers in the period 1926-1943, 0.68% were born out of wedlock, as against 3.65% in the case of the other ethnic groups.

## 3. INTERMARRIAGE

The increase in the ratio of children of mixed parentage is a fact of considerable importance from the Jewish point of view. During 1926-30, of all children born in families where one or both parents were Jewish—4.9% were the issue of mixed marriages, while in the years 1941-43, the percentage of children of mixed parentage increased to 7.3. Mixed couples in which the father was Jewish, had a relatively larger number of births than those in which the mother was Jewish.

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF BIRTHS, 1926-1943, ACCORDING TO PARENTAGE

Period	Total	Both Parents Jewish	Only Father Jewish	Only Mother Jewish
1926-1930	100.00	95.11	3.17	1.72
1931-1935	100.00	94.58	3.62	1.80
1936-1940	100.00	92.77	4.44	2.79
1941-1943	100.00	92.71	4.65	2.64

The rise of the ratio indicated above coincided with an increase in mixed marriages. Among Jewish persons who were married in the period 1926-1930, 2.5% married non-Jews. In 1941-1943 the ratio was 5%. Of the 1,893 Jews who intermarried during the period 1926-1943, 1,271 were men and 622 women. The great majority married Protestants; 27.3% of the men and 23% of the Jewish women married Roman Catholics.

## 4. MARITAL STATUS

The ratio of unmarried persons 15 years of age and over is lower in the Jewish than in the non-Jewish population. In 1941, among those living in cities with at least 30,000 inhabitants, this category comprised

TABLE 5

<i>Period</i>	<i>Percent Inter- married</i>	<i>Percent of Jewish Men Who Inter- married</i>	<i>Percent of Jewish Women Who Inter- married</i>
1926-1930	2.53	3.70	1.34
1931-1935	2.61	3.15	2.06
1936-1940	3.18	4.31	2.01
1941-1943	5.03	6.53	3.47

The change in the age distribution of the Jews probably also accounts for the fact that they had a lower ratio of single persons in 1941 than in 1931, 32.5% of those 15 years of age or over were single in 1941, as compared with 39.8% in 1931.

In 1941 the Jews had a relatively larger number of divorced persons than the other ethnic groups. This is to a certain extent due to differences in the attitude toward divorce.

The younger generation of Jewish women marry at a later age on the average than

did their mothers. Thus, in 1941, only one-fifth of the married Jewish women, 25-44 years of age, living in cities with at least 30,000 inhabitants, had married when they were under 20, as against 30.5% of the Jewesses in the age groups 45-64. The explanation may be found partly in the fact that immigrants usually married at an earlier age, and partly in the higher level of education or socio-economic position of the Canadian-born Jews. Jewesses, moreover, marry at a later age on an average than do the non-Jewish women. It is also known that the present generation of Jewish men marries at a later age than their fathers did.

## 5. AGE DISTRIBUTION AND SEX RATIO

In 1941, the median age of the Jews was approximately 29 years and 10 months and of the non-Jews about 27 years. In 1931 however, the median age of the Jews was 24 years. The increase in median age was due to the downward trend in the birth rate; they had fewer children under 10 years of age in 1941 than in 1931, and a larger ratio of persons 65 years of age and over. In 1941, the non-Jewish population had a higher ratio both of children under 10 years of age than Jews had, and of persons 65 years of age and over. The difference in the median age was therefore due to the fact that the Jews had a relatively larger number of persons in the age groups 20-64 than the other ethnic groups.

**TABLE 6**  
**PERCENTAGE POPULATION 15 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER**  
**IN CITIES WITH AT LEAST 30,000 INHABITANTS, 1941,**  
**BY MARITAL STATUS**

<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>JEW S</i>			<i>NON-JEW S</i>		
	<i>Both Sexes</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Both Sexes</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Single .....	32.61	35.13	30.13	36.43	36.86	36.43
Married .....	60.82	61.55	60.10	54.85	57.77	54.85
Widowed .....	5.38	2.43	8.29	6.95	3.89	6.95
Divorced .....	0.32	0.25	0.38	0.26	0.21	0.26
Separated .....	0.87	0.64	1.09	1.51	1.25	1.51
Unknown .....	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01
Total .....	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00



**TABLE 7**  
**PERCENTAGE POPULATION OF CANADA, 1931 AND 1941,**  
**BY AGE GROUP**

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>JEWS</i>				<i>NON-JEWS</i>	
	1931		1941		1941	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Under 5	7.7	7.4	6.6	6.3	9.1	9.3
5-9	9.4	9.3	6.8	6.8	9.0	9.3
10-14	10.4	10.3	7.8	7.6	9.5	9.7
15-19	12.2	13.2	9.0	8.9	9.6	9.9
20-24	11.4	13.6	9.1	9.7	8.8	9.2
25-29	8.6	9.2	10.1	11.7	8.2	8.5
30-34	7.4	7.1	9.8	10.3	7.5	7.3
35-39	7.3	7.1	8.2	8.1	6.7	6.5
40-44	6.8	6.3	7.2	7.0	5.9	5.8
45-64	16.0	14.0	20.7	19.1	19.5	17.8
65 and over	2.7	2.6	4.7	4.6	6.7	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

In 1941, the median age of the male Jewish population was approximately 30 years and 3 months, and of the females 29 years and 6 months.

In the same year the Jews had a lower ratio of males than the other ethnic groups. The number of men per 100 women was 101.8 and 105.3, respectively. In 1931 the ratio of males to females in the Jewish population was 101.9 to 100.

In the period 1926-1943, Jewish mothers gave birth to a relatively larger number of boys than in the case of non-Jewish mothers. Among all births throughout this period, the number of boys per 100 girls was 116.7 for the Jewish and 105.5 for the non-Jewish population. In the case of the Jews, however, the ratio of living born boys per 100 girls dropped from 129.6 in the period 1926-1930 to 120.5 in 1931-1935, and from 111.9 in 1936-1940 to 103.9 in 1941-1943. This extremely abnormal ratio of boys to girls requires closer study.

#### 6. MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY

Blind people and deaf-mutes are less prevalent among Jews than among the rest of the population. Although the Jews in 1941 constituted 1.5% of the total population, amongst the blind they counted only

0.92%, amongst deaf-mutes 1.15% and of persons both blind and deaf-mute only 0.63%

An analysis of the causes of death in 1941 in cities with at least 40,000 inhabitants suggests that there is some correlation, although not statistically significant, between the percentage of Jews and the frequency of certain causes of death. In the case of tuberculosis, the correlation is negative; however, in that of cancer, diabetes, and heart diseases as causes of death it is positive.

1.68 per cent of the first admissions to hospitals for mental disorders in the years 1932-1944 were of Jewish descent. 52 per cent of the Jewish patients were males; in the case of the other first admissions, 55.6 per cent were males.

The Jews have a lower infant mortality rate than the other ethnic groups. In the

**TABLE 8**  
**JEWISH DEATH RATE**

<i>Period</i>	<i>Total Decedents</i>	<i>Jews</i>	<i>Percent Jews</i>
1926-1930	544,624	3,555	0.65
1931-1935	518,011	4,796	0.93
1936-1940	547,569	5,310	0.97
1941-1943	346,252	3,671	1.06

period 1926-30, when 0.9% of all births were Jewish, only 0.37% of all infant deaths (under 1 year of age) were Jewish; similarly, in 1931-1935 the percentages were 0.94% and 0.45%, respectively; in 1936-1940, 0.93% and 0.38%, and in 1941-1943, 1.03% and 0.42%, respectively. This reflects, among other things, the superior medical facilities in the cities.

The general death rate of Jews is, how-

ever, on the increase: 0.65% of all deaths in 1926-1930; 0.93% in 1931-1935; 0.97% in 1936-1940; 1.06% in 1941-1943. This trend parallels the changing age distribution. The Jews have, however, a lower crude death rate than the rest of the population. This is probably due to the fact that the latter have a high infant mortality rate as well as a higher ratio of persons 65 years of age and over.

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# THE JEWISH POPULATION IN PALESTINE

Liebman Hersch

1. Structure of the Population
2. Marriage and Divorce
3. Birth Rate
4. Death Rate
5. Natural Increase

The population statistics on the Jews of Palestine are of particular interest because of the special place of this community in the contemporary Jewish world as well as for other reasons. For one thing, the Palestine Government, the Jewish Agency, the Histadrut and other organizations have provided a considerable body of statistics. While it is true that the available data disclose gaps and lack of uniformity, still the figures are far more exact, broader in scope, and more systematic than those bearing on Jews in other countries. Palestine is, moreover, a living ethnographic museum, by reason of the varied geographic origins of its Jewish population. Thus, a detailed statistical analysis throws a degree of light on Jewish demography in widely separated areas of the world,—from Western Europe to Bokhara and Yemen.

## 1. STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION

Of the 625,000 Jews of Palestine (as of early 1947) seven-eighths consist either of

**TABLE 1**  
**POPULATION OF PALESTINE, 1922-47**

Year	Total	JEWISH	
		Number	Percent
1922	752,000	83,790	11
1931	1,033,000	174,606	17
1947	1,930,000	625,000	32.4

immigrants who arrived within the past 25 years, or of persons born in the country during that period. This growth has been particularly rapid since 1933.

As a result, the character and structure of the community have changed greatly with the changing ratio of immigrants from the respective countries of origin, and in accordance with its economic expansion. As is true of all countries of recent immigration, the ratio of females to males in Palestine is low. In 1931, the census showed a ratio of 982 females to 1,000 males, and in 1945, according to Jewish Agency figures, the ratio was 967 to 1,000. The lower female ratio appeared in all categories: in 1941-42 there were 947 females to 1,000 males in the rural Jewish population (Ashkenazim 948; Sephardim 931; Yemenites 965, and immigrants from North Africa, Iraq, Kurdistan, Iran, Bokhara, etc., 907); in the kibbutzim, the ratio of females to males was 979 to 1,000; in the smallholders' settlements (Moshvei Ovdim) 640 to 1,000 (Jewish Agency figures).

The Jewish population of Palestine is "younger" than that of any European country prior to 1939, with the exception of Carpatho-Ruthenia (See p. 4, Table 4, in this volume). The ratio of children under 15 in Palestine is considerably higher, and that of elderly persons somewhat lower than that of the European Jewish population.

According to the 1931 census, the age distribution was similar to that of East European Jewry, forming a pyramid with a broad base representing the younger groups. The only exception to the sloping

**TABLE 2**  
**JEWISH POPULATION OF PALESTINE**  
**BY AGE-GROUP, IN PERCENTAGE,**  
**1931 AND 1945**

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>1931</i>	<i>1945</i>
Under 5	13.5	10.8
5-9	11.5	8.9
10-14	7.6	8.1
15-19	7.8	8.3
20-24	11.3	8.0
25-29	12.6	8.6
30-34	9.3	10.0
35-39	5.9	9.7
40-44	4.6	8.7
45-49	3.3	5.9
50-59	5.9	} 13.0
60-69	4.2	
70 and over	2.3	
Not recorded	0.2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

trend of the pyramid was the age group 20-34, which reflected the high ratio of young adults among the immigrants. The percentage of children under 15, however, dropped sharply between 1931 and 1945 (from 32.6% to 27.8%), as did that of the age group 20-29 (from 23.9% to 16.6%). Conversely, the percentage of persons between the ages of 30 and 49 increased considerably from about 23% to 34%. The change in age distribution has widened the disparity between the Jewish and non-Jewish populations of Palestine; among the latter the percentage of children is much higher than among the Jews (See p. 5, Table 5, in this volume).

In regard to marital status, the percentage of married persons in Palestine is greater than among the Jewish populations of other countries, prior to World War II (See p. 7, Table 7, in this volume). Within Palestine, however, the proportion of married persons, particularly women, is lower among Jews than among non-Jews. However, it is noteworthy that among Jews in

the rural areas the rate is closer to the non-Jewish than to the rate of Palestine Jewry as a whole. Thus, in 1941-42 in the rural Jewish population 15 years of age and over, the percentage of single persons was 25.6%, as compared with 23.8% in 1931 among non-Jews and 29.8% among all Jews. The percentages of married persons in the respective categories were 68.6, 64.7 and 61%. Corresponding to the lower rate of mortality among the Jews, in 1931 the percentage of widows and widowers in the Jewish population (15 years of age and older) was 8.3%, as against 10.9% among the non-Jews. On the other hand, the rate of divorce was somewhat higher among the Jews (See p. 7, Table 7, in this volume).

As in other countries, the large majority of the Jews live in urban localities (74.2% in 1945), if one classifies as rural the 10% of the population in the semi-urban colonies (Rishon le-Zion, Rehovot, etc.). In 1947, almost two-thirds were concentrated in the three major cities:

<i>City</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage of Palestine Jewry</i>
Tel Aviv inc. Jaffa	220,000	35.2
Jerusalem	102,000	16.3
Haifa	70,000	11.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>392,000</b>	<b>62.7</b>

About 60,000 were living in the kibbutzim (42,000) and the smallholders' settlements (18,000), which comprised two-fifths of the rural Jewish population (150,000).

## 2. MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

The relative as well as absolute figures regarding marriage and divorce were affected by the course of immigration, the conditions prevailing in Palestine, and most recently by the effect of the war. The legal provisions regulating the admission of settlers have also had an effect on the number of marriages and divorces registered, which include purely formal arrangements made

**TABLE 3**  
**MARRIAGES AND DIVORCES IN PALESTINE, 1943-46**

Year	MARRIAGES				DIVORCES			
	Number		Rate per 1000 population		Number		Ratio to Marriages	
	Jews	Non-Jews	Jews	Moslems	Jews	Non-Jews	Jews	Non-Jews
1943	5,244	14,698	10.6	14.7	1,321	1,972	25.2	13.4
1944	4,842	11,327	9.4	10.7	1,228	1,881	25.4	16.6
1945	5,022	9,980	9.3	9.1	1,364	1,711	27.2	17.1
1946*	6,690	11,651	—	—	—	—	—	—

\*First 11 months.

prior to the arrival in Palestine and dissolved after entry into the country. The official statistics are consequently not to be regarded as entirely conclusive, although they may serve to indicate the general trend.

The marriage rate in Palestine has differed little from that of the Jewish and non-Jewish population in various European countries. The rate was somewhat higher than that of European Jewry because of the higher percentage of young adults in Palestine. Within Palestine itself, on the other hand, the marriage rate of the Moslems was

higher than that of the Jews, despite the significantly lower ratio of young Moslem adults. This disparity, however, is apparently diminishing.

In regard to the divorce rate, the difference between the Jews and non-Jews is far greater than in Europe. The rate of more than one divorce to four marriages among Palestine Jewry is one of the highest in the world.

Table 4 presents the data regarding the average age of women in Palestine at marriage, as computed by Roberto Bachi, Professor of the Hebrew University.

**TABLE 4**  
**AVERAGE AGE OF WOMEN IN PALESTINE AT MARRIAGE \***

Religion	Year	Average Age	Wives of Jews Occupied in:	Year	Average Age
Moslems.....	1931	19.6	Agriculture.....	1938-39	23.1
Christians.....	1931	21.2	Industry.....	1938-39	21.8
Jews.....	1931	23.2	Trade and transportation.....	1938-39	21.4
			Public service and professions..	1938-39	22.9
			Others.....	1938-39	21.1
<i>Jewish Women Residing in:</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Average Age</i>			
Jerusalem.....	1931	22.4			
Tel Aviv.....	1931	24.5			
All urban places....	1931	23.2			
Rural places.....	1931	23.2			
<i>Jewish Women Born in:</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Average Age</i>	<i>Wives of Jewish Farmers</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Average Age</i>
Asia and Africa....	1938-39	18.2	Ashkenazim.....	1942	24.5
Palestine.....	1938-39	20.0	Sephardim.....	1942	22.4
Europe and America..	1938-39	23.5	Other Oriental Groups.....	1942	20.8
Total.....	1938-39	21.9	Total.....	1942	23.2

\*Statistics referring to the respective years were compiled by different methods and are, therefore, not comparable.

TABLE 5  
AVERAGE ANNUAL NUMBER OF BIRTHS IN PALESTINE, 1922-46

Period	Number		Rate per 1000 Population	
	Total <sup>1</sup>	Jews	Total <sup>1</sup>	Jews
1922-25	32,355	3,309	46.4	34.7
1926-30	41,838	5,297	48.6	34.3
1931-35	47,146	6,895	44.7	30.2
1936-40	55,119	10,515	40.6	25.8
1941-45	66,545	13,371	41.6	24.9
1945	76,554	16,358	44.0 <sup>2</sup>	28.3 <sup>2</sup>
1946	79,221	16,579	43.6 <sup>2</sup>	26.5 <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Not including nomads.

<sup>2</sup>Provisional figures.

On the basis of these figures, the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. As in other countries, the Jewish women tend to marry at a later age than the non-Jewish, while the difference between the men of the respective populations is considerably less.

2. The age varies according to the country of origin. At the highest point of the curve are the Jewish women born in Europe and America, followed by the native Palestinians, and the women born in Africa and Asia.

3. The average age at marriage among Jewish women is the same in rural and in urban localities. This is undoubtedly due to the urban origin of the group living in rural places. It is interesting to note that the women engaged in agriculture had the highest average age at marriage.

4. As elsewhere, the average age at marriage is higher among women married to men in the category of public service and the professions than among the wives of men in other occupational groups.

These factors have an important bearing on the birth rate of the several component parts comprised in the Jewish population of the country. The general rule that fertility varies in inverse ratio to the age of the future mother at marriage, may be expected to continue to affect the character of Palestine Jewry.

### 3. BIRTH RATE

The trend of the birth rate during the 25-year period between 1922 and 1946 is shown in Table 5.

On the basis of these data, the following observations may be made:

1. During the period 1936-46 the number of Jewish births comprised about one-fifth of the country's total (one Jewish birth to four non-Jewish births).

2. During the early twenties the Jewish births comprised somewhat more than one-tenth of the country's total, a ratio which has since increased 100% corresponding to the rising Jewish population ratio. On the other hand, in 1946 the births among the non-Jews outnumbered those among the Jews by 46,000 per year, as against 26,000 during the early twenties.

3. The birth rate of Palestine Jewry (until 1939) was appreciably higher than that of the Jews in any European country (until 1939), with the exception of Carpatho-Ruthenia (See p. 9, Table 8).

4. The disparity between the Jewish and non-Jewish birth rates was greater in Palestine than elsewhere. In Palestine, during 1945 and 1946, when the non-Jewish rate was 51.8 per 1000 population, the ratio was slightly above one to two. Roughly, based on the same number of inhabitants, two Arab children were born for every Jewish child. It must be acknowledged that the birth rate among the Palestine Arabs is one of the highest recorded for any population.

It is, moreover, quite possible that their population is rather higher and, consequently, their birth rate lower than official statistics indicate.

5. While the non-Jewish birth rate declined but slightly during the period 1922-46, the Jewish rate dropped about 25%. This trend, it must be emphasized, developed despite the rise in the ratio of the Jewish age group 20-49, from 47.0% in 1941 to 50.9 in 1945.

R. Bachi's analysis of families with children, according to the three religious communities in the Palestine population, throws additional light on this subject.

TABLE 6

**AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER FAMILY IN PALESTINE, 1938-39**  
(Childless Families not Included)

Number of Years since Marriage	AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN		
	Jewish	Christian	Moslem
Up to 5	1.3	2.0	1.7
" " 10	1.8	3.4	3.2
" " 15	2.1	4.4	4.5
" " 20	2.2	5.1	5.4
" " 30	2.3	5.4	5.9

As Table 6 indicates, the disparity in fertility between Jewish and non-Jewish mothers appeared during the first five years of marriage, and increased thereafter. After the fifteenth year the size of all but a few Jewish families was fixed, while the non-

TABLE 7

**AVERAGE ANNUAL RATE OF BIRTHS PER 1000 WOMEN IN PALESTINE, BY AGE GROUP**

Age Group	Jewish (1940-41)	Moslem (1939-41)	Ratio of Moslem to Jewish Rate
15-19	21.0	58.9	2.8
20-24	107.6	364.4	3.4
25-29	145.3	426.0	2.9
30-34	85.4	306.2	3.6
35-39	41.4	276.7	6.7
40-44	11.4	128.9	11.3
45-49	0.7	44.8	64.0
15-49	70.7	225.5	3.2

Jewish families in the same category continued to grow. This is to be attributed, even if not entirely, to the later age at which Jewish mothers have married.

A comparison of the fertility of Jewish and other women by age groups brings out even more clearly the difference between the two communities.

Table 7 shows that around 1940, the Arab women were more than three times as fertile as the Jewish. This ratio holds also for the age groups 15-29, but the disparity grows increasingly wider in the older groups. Whereas Jewish women above the age of 44 virtually cease to bear offspring, the Arab women 45-49 years of age are still quite fertile. We may add that in 1940-41 the rate of fertility of the Jewish women of Palestine (70.7 per 1000 women between 15 and 49 years of age) was slightly higher than that of the Jewish women of Czechoslovakia (66 per 1000).

In regard to the Jewish women of Palestine, we must take into account wide variations in the rate of fertility according to the many different countries of birth represented by this population.

Table 8 presents the entire gamut of the fertility rate for the civilized world, from the lowest to the highest. The difference between the rates of the respective groups was far greater than the disparity between the Arab women and the Jewish women of Palestine as a whole. The ratio between the rate of the Yemenite and the Austro-German group was five to one.

For a population to maintain its numerical strength by natural increase, the women (15-49 years of age) must on an average bear 2.5 children each; this average provides for the replacement of the parent generation; for those who die childless, etc. Hence the average of 2.16 children in the Jewish population of Palestine shows a "deficit." This deficit was greatest among the women born in Central and Northern Europe, and was inadequately counterbalanced by the high fertility rate of the Jewish population born in Palestine, other Asiatic countries and in Africa. The fer-

**TABLE 8**  
**AVERAGE DEFINITIVE NUMBER OF CHILDREN OF JEWISH**  
**WOMEN IN PALESTINE, BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, 1938-1940**

<i>Europe</i>	<i>Average Number of Children</i>	<i>Asia and Africa</i>	<i>Average Number of Children</i>
Austria	1.32	Egypt	2.93
Germany	1.47	Turkey	3.55
Czechoslovakia	1.49	Syria and Lebanon	4.63
Latvia	1.56	Aden	5.11
Romania	1.58	Afghanistan	5.70
Poland	1.64	Iraq	5.79
Lithuania	1.66	Iran	6.41
Hungary	1.66	Morocco	7.04
England	1.66	Yemen	7.28
Bulgaria	2.12	Palestine	3.43
U.S.S.R.	2.46	America	1.83
Italy	2.75	Europe and America	1.71
Greece	3.03	Asia and Africa	5.04
Yugoslavia	3.54	All countries	2.16

tility rate of the various groups has thus far remained similar to that of the communities from which they derive.

This point may be further demonstrated by the data regarding the size of Jewish families. In 1938-40 over half (50.9%) of the families where the mother was born in Europe had one child each; in the Palestinian group the ratio was 25.4%, and among those born in Asia or in Africa, 12%. Conversely, the respective ratios for families of five or more children were 2.7, 28.6 and 55.1%.

In 1941-42, among the rural Jewish pop-

ulation the definite average family had 2.23 children, a figure which is very close to the previously mentioned average of 2.16 for Jewish women in Palestine. Hence, in regard to fertility rate, the usual distinction between rural and urban inhabitants does not obtain among Palestine Jewry. In the kibbutzim, indeed, the average was no more than 1.7 children. This is a most unusual situation, which indicates that the rural Jewry of that country is a group *sui generis*, an agricultural community which practices birth control just as the urban population does.

**TABLE 9**  
**AVERAGE DEFINITIVE NUMBER OF CHILDREN OF JEWISH**  
**WOMEN IN PALESTINE, BY MOTHER'S REGION OF**  
**ORIGIN AND FATHER'S OCCUPATION, 1938-1939**

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>MOTHER'S REGION OF ORIGIN</i>			
	<i>Europe &amp; America</i>	<i>Palestine</i>	<i>Asia and Africa</i>	<i>All Regions</i>
Agriculture	1.50	2.00	5.61	1.65
Industry	1.61	3.35	4.46	2.03
Trade and Transportation	1.86	4.64	5.66	2.56
Public Service and Professions	1.53	2.79	2.66	1.77
All groups	1.60	3.24	4.70	2.05



**TABLE 10**  
**AVERAGE ANNUAL NUMBER OF DEATHS IN PALESTINE, 1922-46**

<i>Period</i>	NUMBER		RATE PER 1000 POPULATION	
	<i>Total<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>Total<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Jews</i>
1922-25	16,675	1,325	23.8	13.7
1926-30	20,923	1,790	24.3	11.6
1931-35	22,068	2,100	21.0	9.3
1936-40	22,442	3,303	16.5	8.1
1941-45	23,235	3,783	14.6	7.1
1945	21,740	3,595	12.5 <sup>2</sup>	6.2 <sup>2</sup>
1946	21,942	3,617	12.1 <sup>2</sup>	5.8 <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Not including nomads.

<sup>2</sup>Provisional figures.

The variation in the fertility rate according to the occupation of the father is shown in Table 9.

The rate of the group engaged in industry was very close to the average among Palestine Jewry as a whole. Among the others, it was considerably higher only in the categories of trade and transportation and considerably lower both among the agricultural group and those occupied in public service and the professions. This situation again points to the "advanced" character of the rural population.

If we compare Tables 9 and 4, we find that, in the various occupational categories also, there is a close connection between the woman's age at marriage and her fertility. The highest marriage age and consequently the lowest fertility will be found among the groups occupied in agriculture. Following closely come the groups engaged in the public service and in liberal professions. A markedly lower marriage age and thus a higher fertility are found among those engaged in industry; while the youngest marriage age of all, and the correspondingly highest fertility, is found among those engaged in commerce.

#### 4. DEATH RATE

If from the standpoint of the future of the Jewish population, the birth rate has been rather unfavorable, the decline in the death rate has been more encouraging. The trend during the period 1922-46 is shown in Table 10.

The following observations may be made on the basis of the mortality figures:

1. An annual rate of six per 1,000 population must be viewed as temporary and as bound to rise as the predominantly youthful immigrant group becomes older. Even if we assume that a certain number of deaths (newborn babies in particular) were not recorded, the death rate of Palestine Jewry was the lowest ever recorded for any population group, including non-Jews.

2. The ratio of the Jewish to the non-Jewish death rate (15.6 and 15.1 per 1000 in 1945-46) was about 1 to 2.5.

3. During the quarter century in question the rate has declined sharply both among the Jewish and the non-Jewish population. In 1946, with a total population almost three times as large as in 1922, the deaths numbered only one third more. The general annual Palestinian rate of about 12 per 1000 population corresponds to that of Great Britain, for example, and is significantly lower than that of France, Italy or Austria (the difference in age distribution must not, however, be overlooked).

The trend of the rate of infant mortality (first 12 months), an important factor in this connection, is indicated in Table 11.

These data throw light on a number of interesting facts:

1. During the period 1922-46 the rate of infant mortality declined sharply in each of the three divisions of the population, particularly if one takes into account the

**TABLE 11**  
**AVERAGE ANNUAL INFANT MORTALITY IN PALESTINE**  
**(FIRST 12 MONTHS), 1922-46**

<i>Period</i>	NUMBER		RATE PER 100 LIVE BIRTHS			
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>Moslem</i>	<i>Christian</i>
1922-25	5,816	416	17.86	12.70	19.00	14.47
1926-30	7,429	505	17.80	9.56	19.34	15.87
1931-35	7,098	526	15.12	7.92	16.62	13.63
1936-40	6,854	628	12.42	5.95	14.24	11.05
1941-45	6,553	590	10.04	4.58	11.64	8.41
1945	6,124	586	7.99	3.50	9.39	7.06
1946	6,047	523	7.64	3.15	8.81	

relatively less complete data of the earlier years. In 1946 the rate of infant mortality of the total population was down to 43% of the rate recorded in 1922-25.

2. The Jewish rate at the end of the period was one of the lowest in the world, equalled only by the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and Australia, lower than that of Switzerland, England, the United States, etc. The rate in France was twice as high as among the Jews of Palestine.

3. Within Palestine, the decline has varied: the downward trend was more marked among the Jews than among the Christians or Moslems. Among the Jews the rate in 1946 was one-fourth of that recorded at the beginning of the period, among the non-Jews it was one-half. While a declining rate of infant mortality obtained throughout the more advanced countries during this period, the sharp decline among the Jewish children born in Palestine was without parallel. In 1945, relatively speaking, there died one Jewish infant for every two Christian and every 2.7 Moslem infants. Moreover, even the comparatively high rate of the Palestinian Moslems was about one-third below that of other Arab countries (Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan), and on a par with that of certain European lands (Czechoslovakia, Italy and Spain).

The disparity between the death rate of the Jewish and the Moslem populations is greatest in the youngest age group (under 12 months), and grows progressively smaller in the older groups. The margin, nevertheless, remains fairly large until the ages 55 and 65 for men and women, respectively. Within the older groups, the much higher ratio of Moslems who live beyond the ages indicated, is evidently the result of the process of natural selection, which is seen in operation in the comparatively high death rate of the younger groups.

The rapid decline in the mortality rate of Palestine Jewry is reflected in the upward trend of life expectancy (Table 12).

**TABLE 12**  
**AVERAGE EXPECTATION OF LIFE IN**  
**PALESTINE (IN YEARS) AT**  
**BIRTH, 1926-1941**

<i>Community</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Jewish	1926-27	53.3	55.9
"	1936-37	60.6	64.2
"	1940-41	62.3	64.6
Moslem	1938-40	47.5	49.2

Between 1926-27 and 1940-41 the life expectancy increased by 9 years, and reached a level exceeded only by a few countries (Scandinavian states, Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand), and equal to that of Switzerland and the white population of

**TABLE 13**  
**AVERAGE ANNUAL EXCESS OF BIRTHS OVER DEATHS IN**  
**PALESTINE, 1922-46**

<i>Period</i>	NUMBER			DIFFERENCE BETWEEN <i>Non-Jews and Jews</i>	RATE PER 1000 POPULATION	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Non-Jews</i>	<i>Jews</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Jewish</i>
1922-25	15,680	13,696	1,984	11,712	22.6	21.1
1926-30	20,915	17,408	3,507	13,901	24.3	22.7
1931-35	25,078	20,283	4,795	15,488	23.7	20.9
1936-40	32,677	25,465	7,212	18,253	24.1	17.8
1941-45	43,310	33,722	9,588	24,134	27.0	17.3
1945	54,814	42,051	12,763	29,288	31.5	22.0
1946	57,279	44,317	12,962	31,355	31.5	20.7

the United States. In all other countries the life expectancy is lower than in the Jewish population of Palestine. Even if we allow for a margin of error due to incomplete registration of infant deaths, the average longevity of Palestine Jewry was among the world's highest. The expectation of life among the Jews was 15 years more than among the Moslems of Palestine.

#### 5. NATURAL INCREASE

The trend of the annual excess of births over deaths is shown in Table 13.

On the basis of Table 13, we can justifiably make the following observations:

1. By 1945-46 the rate of Jewish natural increase exceeded that recorded in any European or American Jewry, reflecting the unusual age distribution of Palestine Jewry.

2. Both in absolute and in relative terms, the natural increase of the non-Jewish population has been much more rapid than that of the Jews (38.2 and 36.7 per 1000 population in 1945-46 as against 22 and 20.7). The phenomenal rate within the non-Jewish population has, indeed, left the Malthusian theory far behind. Whereas Malthus held that a population left undisturbed tended to double itself in a 25-year period, the non-Jewish population of Palestine, with an excess of 37.5 births over deaths per 1000 population, could double itself in 19 years!

3. Whereas the trend in the non-Jewish population was steadily rising, among the Jews a fairly stable annual rate of about 20 per 1000 prevailed.

4. Paralleling the growth of the Jewish population by immigration, the annual excess of births over deaths rose from some 2,000 in 1922-25 to 13,000 in 1946. This increase (6.5 times) was about twice that of the non-Jews (from about 14,000 to 44,000). However, the absolute increase of the non-Jewish population, as a result of the excess of births over deaths, continued more and more to exceed the absolute Jewish increase (11,712 annually in 1922-25 and 31,355 in 1946). Thus, even if no non-Jewish immigrants had entered in 1947 and after, the Jewish population could maintain its ratio in the country's total population only by adding 31,000 immigrants each year to its ranks.

It must, moreover, be recognized that the trend of the Jewish rate of natural increase, as shown above, is apt to be misleading. In a population with a large ratio in the reproductive age groups, even a low rate of fertility will result in a significant excess of births over deaths. A population which has such an annual excess may, nevertheless, be on the threshold of numerical decline, unless the annual number of births is large enough to replace the segment of the population within the reproductive age groups. As was pointed out above in connection with Table 8, in 1938-40 the fertility of the

Jewish women of Palestine showed a "deficit," the ratio of children indicating that the succeeding generation would be smaller in number than the parent population. It is true that during the years 1943-1946, when the immediate danger of war in Palestine had subsided, the birth rate increased somewhat again, as it always occurs after war; but we must be guided not by the immediate postwar level but rather by the rate prevailing in 1938-39.

The question raised here has been carefully studied by Bachi, whose findings are presented below (Table 14). It should be noted that a net reproduction rate of one indicates a ratio of births to deaths which is just sufficient to replace the female population within the reproductive age groups. A higher index is evidence of a growing and a lower index of a virtually declining population.

Table 14 enables us to reach the following conclusions:

1. In general, on the eve of World War II, while the net reproduction of the Jewish population (0.94) showed a moderate deficit, it was seriously below the rate of the non-Jews (2.02 in 1939-42), one of the highest in the world. At this rate, each successive generation of non-Jews within the reproductive age groups would double itself.
2. Within the Jewish population the lowest index (0.77) was, that of the immi-

grants from Europe and America. On this basis the following decline must be predicted: the second generation would number 77% of the parent generation, the third 59%, the fourth 46% and so on.

3. Among persons of European origin, the net reproduction rate was particularly low among Jews born in Central Europe; the Austrian and German Jews had the lowest rate, and there was also a low rate among Jews born in Poland and Lithuania. On the other hand, the net reproduction rate of the Russian and Balkan Jews was substantially larger than the rate necessary to maintain its present population level.

4. The Jews born in Palestine had an index of 1.5, indicating a 50% increase over the parent generation.

5. Aided by the superior hygienic conditions in Palestine, the Jews from other Asiatic lands and from Morocco showed a very high index. The highest index was reached by the Yemenites (2.92), indicating a second generation almost three times as numerous as the parents.

In view of the disparity between the Ashkenazic and Sephardic reproduction rates, unless subsequent immigration greatly increases the ratio of the former in the Jewish population, the complexion of Palestine Jewry is apparently bound to change greatly. At the prevailing rate of natural increase, in the course of a few

TABLE 14  
NET REPRODUCTION RATE OF PALESTINE JEWRY, 1938-40,  
BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF WOMEN 15-49 YEARS OF AGE

<i>Europe</i>	<i>Rate</i>	<i>Asia and Africa</i>	<i>Rate</i>
Austria	0.60	Egypt	1.12
Germany	0.66	Turkey	1.42
Czechoslovakia	0.67	Syria and Lebanon	1.86
Romania	0.71	Aden	2.05
Latvia	0.71	Afghanistan	2.29
Poland	0.74	Iraq	2.32
Hungary	0.75	Iran	2.57
England	0.75	Morocco	2.82
Lithuania	0.75	Yemen	2.92
Bulgaria	0.90	Palestine	1.50
U.S.S.R.	1.11	America	0.83
Italy	1.24	Europe and America	0.77
Greece	1.28	Asia and Africa	2.02
Yugoslavia	1.50	All countries	0.94

TABLE 15

**NET REPRODUCTION RATE OF PALESTINE JEWRY, 1938-39,  
BY MOTHER'S REGION OF ORIGIN AND FATHER'S OCCUPATION**

Occupation	MOTHER'S REGION OF ORIGIN			
	Europe and America	Palestine	Asia and Africa	All Regions
Agriculture	0.70	0.91	2.18	0.74
Industry	0.72	1.44	1.83	0.88
Trade and Transportation	0.82	2.03	2.24	1.09
Public Service and Professions	0.70	1.26	1.12	0.80
All groups	0.72	1.42	1.89	0.88

generations, the Sephardim should become the predominant element.

As another aspect of the variations in the reproduction rates, we may consider the findings according to occupational groups.

Only the category of trade and transportation, taken as a unit, showed a favorable index (1.09). The largest deficit was that of the groups engaged in agriculture, and in public service and the professions. Among the immigrants from Europe and America each of the occupational groups showed an unfavorable trend; by contrast, immigrants from Africa and Asia had a high index in every occupation, though it was low in public service and the professions. Among native Palestinian Jews, the agricultural group showed a deficit, while the category of trade and transportation had a very high net reproduction rate.

As was to be expected on the basis of the foregoing data, the rural population, particularly in the kibbutzim, showed a deficit. According to figures referring to a 5-year period, 1936-37 to 1941-42, the index for the kibbutzim as a whole was 0.75; classified by country of origin the figures were as follows: Asia and Africa 1.12; Palestinian-born 1.02; Russia 0.92; Romania 0.75; Poland 0.72; Latvia 0.70; Germany 0.68; Czechoslovakia and Austria 0.56. The Ashkenazim had an index of 0.74 and the others 0.87. Thus we see that the Ashkenazic and the rural Jewish population have developed a neo-Malthusian trend to the point at which even the minimal Jewish death rate does not ensure the replacement of the adult generation of Palestine Jewry by an equally large population in the next generation.

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# JEWISH COLONIZATION IN RUSSIA

## I. IMPERIAL RUSSIA

I. N. Steinberg

1. First Attempts (1804-1825)
2. From Nicholas I till the Revolution (1825-1917)
3. Summary

### 1. FIRST ATTEMPTS (1804-1825)

The first large-scale experiment in Jewish colonization dates back to the beginning of the 19th century. By successive partitions of Poland (1772, 1793, 1795), Russia had acquired vast territories with more than three-quarters of a million Jews. The Russian authorities, faced with a serious Jewish problem for the first time, found themselves under the necessity of attempting a solution of the complex situation which had prevailed for centuries in the newly-annexed Polish territories.

The Jews in the congested cities of these territories were engaged in handicraft, industry and commerce; in the villages they frequently combined handicraft, produce marketing and various agricultural activities with the occupations of liquor distiller and innkeeper. The far-reaching agrarian crisis which gripped Poland in the last years of her independence resulted in deep peasant impoverishment which the ruling landed gentry proceeded to ascribe to "Jewish exploitation" in the villages. In consequence, even liberal circles such as that of T. Czacki worked on plans for the elimination of the Jewish population from the villages by their removal to the cities or to specially created agricultural settlements.

The basic principles underlying these projects were now adopted by the Russian administrators and incorporated in the remarkable *Statute on the Jews* (1804), promulgated by ukase of Tsar Alexander I. The plan of reform presented to the commission drafting the Statute by the Russian poet Derzhavin was partly based on the proposal of the liberal Jewish merchant and army contractor Nota Notkin of Shklov, the first to suggest that Jews be directed into industry and agriculture, and that factories be established for this purpose "near the ports of the Black Sea."

The Statute of 1804, a peculiar combination of "Enlightened Absolutism" and ruthless coercion, ordered all Jews in rural areas (about 60,000 families) to leave the villages by the beginning of 1808, but at the same time offered them the opportunity to become farmers. The area earmarked for Jewish settlement was the newly acquired province of Novorossiia, the vast steppes of which, extending from the Crimea to Northern Ukraine, the government was eager to populate. The Jews now received the right to buy land and to settle in Novorossiia and to acquire land in the annexed provinces, Lithuania, White Russia, etc. Wealthy Jews who undertook to finance the settlement of at least 30 families in these areas, were accorded permission to operate inns. Jews without means were to receive state-owned land free, and about 30,000 dessiatins (1 dess. =

2.73 acres) were set aside for this purpose. In addition to a 10-year term of tax-exemption and government aid in the initial establishment of their families, the Statute guaranteed the colonists "personal freedom and the same protection of the law as exists for all subjects."

Once the Russian Jews had abandoned hope of averting their eviction from the villages, numbers of them turned towards acceptance of the projected agricultural settlements. The first pioneers were two Jews from the province of Mohilev, Israel Lenpart and Nahum Finkenstein, who in 1806 approached Bakunin, governor of Mohilev, with a request for land on behalf of 36 families, "trained in agriculture." Bakunin turned over this request to Count Kochubei, the Minister of the Interior who was in charge of Jewish affairs. When the poverty-stricken Mohilev Jews proved unable to finance a delegation to "investigate and choose suitable land," Bakunin himself advanced the necessary funds. With the consent of the Kherson governor, Duc de Richelieu, a former French emigré, the Mohilev delegates selected 6,600 dessiatins of land. In the meantime, other groups announced their desire to settle in the province of Kherson. These included 2,000 persons from the Mohilev district and several hundred families from other regions. Still others came to the Kherson province to settle in agricultural colonies at their own expense. Finally, in 1807, government funds were assigned for the Mohilev group—the Jewish community contributed 6,000 rubles—and the first 293 persons left for their new homes.

At the close of the year, the colonization area comprised a population of almost 500 families, of whom 180 had come without permission. These families founded the first four colonies in Southern Russia, giving them Jewish names like Israilevka and Sdei Menuha (Fields of Rest). Simultaneously, the pitiless eviction from the villages of tens of thousands of Jews who could find no haven in the overcrowded urban areas provided new recruits for the agricultural

projects. "Most of them have no bread and no roof over their heads; therefore they are attracted to Novorossiia," reported the governor of Vitebsk, Sumarokov. Nearly 900 families from the province of Vitebsk applied for land. Alarmed by the great influx of Jews, the local officials warned the Minister not to send any more colonists to the steppes, since "there were no houses or implements for them, and already countless Jews wander about without homes." The government thereupon ordered further emigration of Jews to Southern Russia stopped (1810).

After a special investigation, however, the government decided to resume colonization, and funds were appropriated for the purpose. In 1817, when the colonies asked for an extension of their loans from the government, the request was readily granted. Both the Tsar and his ministers were of the opinion that the colonists should receive assistance, "since they had the courage, in spite of their national traditions, to become peasants, and since they may yet attract to this useful work many of their brethren who now shun it." The enforcement of the ukase of 1810 was suspended and about 1,500 families were sent to Southern Russia from the Mohilev province alone. The local Jewish communities were to give each family 400 rubles, and during 1823 the government allotted an additional 50,000 dessiatins.

## 2. FROM NICHOLAS I TILL THE REVOLUTION (1825-1917)

In the year 1827 Tsar Nicholas I introduced compulsory military service for Jews and the period of the "Cantonist" persecutions began. The colonists, however, found favor with the Tsar and, together with their children, received exemption from military service as long as they worked the land. Since military service took 25 years out of a man's life, this concession was a further incentive for the Jewish farmers to cling to their occupation. In 1835, there were 6,745 persons in the Jewish settlements, of whom

no less than 5,716 earned their livelihood from agriculture and cattle raising.

On April 13, 1835, Russian Jewry was presented with a new statute. Officially its purpose was to enable the Jews to earn an honorable livelihood "primarily from agriculture." Every Jew devoting himself to agriculture was exempted from all past taxation debts, and was entitled to claim state-owned land within the Pale of Settlement as well as outside. The new farmers were also exempted from military service. If a wealthy Jew settled 50 Jewish workers on privately purchased land, he was awarded honorary citizenship, entitling him to certain privileges.

When the Jewish masses received this new law somewhat indifferently, the government ascribed it to distaste for the climate in Southern Russia. The Finance Minister, Count Kankrin, thereupon suggested to the Tsar the free distribution of land to Jews in the unpopulated steppes of Western Siberia. On November 12, 1835, 15,000 dessiatins were assigned to them in the provinces of Tomsk and Omsk. This time Jews responded enthusiastically, and again an unorganized migration ensued. Within three months about 1,000 families from Kurland and the provinces of Minsk and Mohilev started on their journey. Kankrin instructed the Siberian officials to prepare housing for them and to provide each man with 15 dessiatins of good land, agricultural implements, cattle, etc. "In Western Russia," according to Nikitin, "there was not a single town from which Jews did not trek towards Siberia. They did not wait for permission. . . In the fall, sick, emaciated Jews—71 of them—suddenly appeared before the Tambov governor; they had started from Mohilev on their way to Siberia, had sold all their belongings on the way, had suffered starvation and cold and could proceed no further. The governor provided them with clothing, shelter and medical care, and presented their case to the minister, Count Bludov. Bludov ordered the assignment of funds and every

possible assistance for the continuation of their journey."

Meanwhile, it had occurred to the central authorities that Siberia, the land to which convicts were exiled, might have a detrimental effect on the Jews, and that it would be wiser to send them to Southern Russia, where Jewish settlements were already in existence. Thus, at the beginning of 1837, Nicholas I cancelled his own Siberian scheme. At the same time, a new administrative system was introduced in the old colonies. In accordance with the military spirit of the regime, the administrators were to be selected from among former army officers so that the colonies might resemble the type of "military settlement" known in Russian history as the *Arakcheyev* settlement.

A number of Jews, already on their way to Siberia, pleaded to be sent wherever they could devote themselves to agriculture, since they were "fully determined to abandon their former occupations." Once again the government granted funds and allotted 118,000 dessiatins in the province of Kherson. The established colonists gave the newcomers a hearty welcome. At the beginning of 1838, the population of the old colonies in Kherson numbered 957 families (6,762 persons). Within the colonies a certain social differentiation had developed; for example, a small group of well-to-do farmers owned most of the cattle. Apart from those directly engaged in agriculture, there were also 502 craftsmen; in addition, there were 11 shopkeepers, 43 teachers, and 31 religious functionaries. The new "Siberian" wave of immigration to Kherson in 1838 brought a contingent of almost 6,500 Jews, who settled on the land at the government's expense.

By 1845, there were 15 colonies in Southern Russia with a total population of almost 13,000. Of these colonists 20 percent earned a fairly good living as farmers, and a similar number managed to eke out a more modest existence. The rest were forced to seek a means of livelihood other than agriculture.



With the active support of Count Kisseliev, an ardent champion of Jewish agricultural settlements, a new "Statute on Jewish Farmers" was enacted in 1844. Kisseliev contemplated the creation of "model" settlements on a large scale in two new provinces, Yekaterinoslav and the Crimea. "This task," he wrote, "attracts the special attention of the Tsar, and I shall have to report every step and each result." As early as 1846, 83 families from the Mohilev province volunteered to go; another 41 came from Kovno and 175 from Vitebsk. Kisseliev hoped that this "scheme would be regarded as the beginning of the colonization of the Jewish people on a large scale; as an experiment that would teach us how to work in the future." Again the familiar pattern was repeated; wandering masses arrived in rags, exhausted by hunger and cold. Nevertheless, 285 Jewish families established six colonies in the Yekaterinoslav province in 1847. In the same year more than 10,000 families applied for land.

Records of the year 1850 show that the Yekaterinoslav province had over 3,000 Jews, while the number of colonists in the Kherson region had fallen to 11,484. The decrease in the latter region was due primarily to disease; in the year 1849, 5,762 suffered from scurvy and other diseases, and no less than 1,539 died. Yet the work continued, and Kisseliev even created a special fund out of which loans were given to Jews to help them settle on the land. In 1856 a rich Jewish merchant, Yevzel Günzburg (founder of the noted family of the Barons Günzburg), put 10,000 rubles at the disposal of Kisseliev for the best Jewish farmers. In that year there were 14,523 Jews living in the 19 colonies of the Kherson province and 9,596 in the 14 colonies of the Yekaterinoslav province, a total of 24,119.

On May 30, 1866, the Tsar confirmed the decision to repeal the special laws on Jewish agricultural settlements and to terminate the levying of funds for this purpose on the Jewish communities. The Jewish colonies were included in the general ad-

ministrative and economic structure, the colonists simply becoming "Jewish peasants." They then numbered 1,936 families in the Kherson colonies and 900 families in the 18 Yekaterinoslav colonies, a total of 17,745 persons. Of this number, 52% were engaged in agriculture, 36% in crafts and trade, and 12% were termed "vagrants."

The introduction of universal military service in 1874 meant the abolition of the 25-year term recruitments and the brutal practice of conscripting small boys from among the Jewish city dwellers. This to a great extent weakened the incentive for the Jews to leave the cities and to migrate to the colonies where—as was well known—life was full of hardships.

According to an investigation of the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) in 1897, there were 4,603 Jewish families (32,280 persons) in the Novorossiia area. About two-thirds of this population were engaged in agriculture. None of the political and economic catastrophes of later years was able to destroy the firmly rooted Jewish colonies in Southern Russia. After the First World War they received aid from the JCA. According to its report of 1927, there existed 48 colonies with 7,842 farms and a population of 35,503 owning about 100,000 dessiatins of cultivated land.

On the basis of the Statute of 1835, Jews had also begun to turn to agriculture in Western Russia, where they had lived for centuries. They founded agricultural settlements on their own land as well as on land rented from the government. One of their important objects was to obtain exemption from military service; but their deep-seated poverty prevented them from developing their farms extensively. Nevertheless, most of these settlements remained in existence for many years. In 1897 there were 258 settlements with a population of 36,153, whose farms comprised 39,710 dessiatins. As was pointed out by B. Brutzkus, although this population exceeded in number that of the Jewish colonies in Southern Russia, those in the western parts owned

far less land, so that an improved agricultural economy was out of the question. Nevertheless, particularly in Lithuania and Byelorussia (White Russia), Jews developed a social class which had completely adjusted itself to the peasant way of life. A really stable, firmly rooted peasant economy, however, was created only in the southern colonies.

### 3. SUMMARY

The record of the history of Jewish colonization in tsarist Russia is a significant chapter in modern Jewish history. This colonization did not create a large peasant class, but it did enrich the social structure of Russian Jewry. The change was qualitative in character and was destined to exert a great influence on the future history of the people. Although there is no doubt that it was the combined pressure of tsarist persecution, compulsory military service, and poverty that induced a portion of the Jewish people to turn to farming, their interest in agriculture was nevertheless profound. No less than 48 of the first 80 years were marked by bad harvests, livestock epidemics and ravages by locusts. Notwithstanding support from the highest authorities in the country, the settlements

suffered from persecution on the part of petty officials, and the administrative regulations were constantly changed. Despite all these difficulties, thousands of Jewish families established themselves firmly on the land.

It is a remarkable fact that the government settled the Jews as free peasants. Although the Russian peasantry was to remain in a state of serfdom for another fifty years, the first Jewish peasants did not become the property of landowners, but were responsible to government officials directly. They did not own their land communally, as did the peasants of the commune (*obshchina*), but held it under a system of household ownership. Very soon, however, they found it necessary to apply certain types of co-operation in their work. Both the pioneer character of the colonization and the government administration demanded it. "The Jews had to live, eat, plough and sow together, they had to hold their implements as communal property and share the proceeds equally on a collective basis" (Nikitin). This seems to have been the case at least during the first stages of settlement. A new avenue of Jewish life was thus opened.

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## II. SOVIET RUSSIA

Gregor Aronson

1. European Russia
2. Birobidjan

### 1. EUROPEAN RUSSIA

In the years of revolution 1917-1919, the economic foundations of the broad Jewish masses in Soviet Russia were destroyed. This was due, on the one hand, to civil war and pogroms—especially in the Ukraine—and on the other, to the communist policy of the Soviet Government which, in abolishing capitalism, eliminated petty trade and industry, the century-old occupations of East-European Jews. The Jewish cities were in those years filled with millions of “declassed” Jews who could find no employment in big industrial enterprises owing to the lack of necessary qualifications and the general deterioration of Russia’s economic life.

The consequence was a movement toward settlement on the land which, after the agrarian revolution, was as readily available to Jews as to non-Jews. In the beginning the Jews attempted to establish themselves on the outskirts of the cities where they had lived, and for this purpose organized several agricultural co-operatives (artels). According to the following official table, some 4,000 families, consisting of 21,000 persons, established 300 artels during that period. They were allotted almost 34,000 dessiatins (1 dessiatin = 2.73 acres) of land in the western parts of Russia (in Byelorussia, including the Homel and Smolensk regions), in the region of Odessa and in the Northern Ukraine (the regions of Kiev, Volhynia and Podolia).

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Number of Collectives</i>	<i>Number of Families</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Land (in dessiatins)</i>
Western Russia	89	861	5,675	9,631
Northern Ukraine	72	1,330	6,095	4,126
Odessa District	136	1,750	8,981	20,261
<b>Total</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>3,941</b>	<b>20,751</b>	<b>34,018</b>

Some Jews also received land individually, according to the Soviet decree of 1917. In this way 1,456 families totalling 7,712 persons settled in Byelorussia. In the Odessa region there were 744 families totalling 3,470 persons. They received 8,765 dessiatins of land. B. Brutzkus estimates that during the period of the agrarian revolution from 1917-1918 to 1925, Jews were allotted more than 45,000 dessiatins of land in the neighborhood of their old homes. In spite of the difficulties of that turbulent period, the lack of agricultural machinery and their inexperience, the majority of the new Jewish farmers adapted themselves to their new occupation. In Byelorussia, with the help of agricultural experts, they were able to introduce a new sowing system which proved superior to the traditional method in use by the neighboring non-Jewish farmers.

The economic position of the Jewish masses did not improve in 1921-22 despite the fact that the Government again permitted some forms of private trade and commerce after the NEP (New Economic Policy) had been adopted. A series of restrictive decrees and taxation laws virtually denied a secure existence to the small busi-



*Courtesy Joint Distribution Committee*

#### AN AGROJOINT AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL IN THE CRIMEA

nessman. Land on the outskirts of cities was no longer available for farming and at the same time emigration abroad was strictly prohibited. The situation became so desperate that the impoverished masses began to consider migration to new areas within the country, in search of free land. The sparsely populated steppes of the Ukraine were the logical place, and in 1922 the Jews embarked upon a spontaneous trek towards the Ukraine. At the beginning they converged upon the old Jewish colonies in the Kherson and Yekaterinoslav regions. These colonies had managed to recover after the civil war and the pogroms; in 1924 they harbored nearly 7,500 families, with a total population of 37,000. The old colonists welcomed the Jewish newcomers (about 800 families) to their settlements. In several cases in the Kherson region, the newcomers, together with the old colonists, founded new settlements. According to figures available for 1937, there were in that year 48 settlements with 7,842 homesteads

in the region of the old Jewish colonies. The number of families was 10,217.

The migratory movement was particularly strong in the year of the famine 1922 among the Jewish communities of the Kiev, Podolia and Volhynia regions. Driven by hunger and need, scouts set out for the Odessa region, the Crimea and Southern Ukraine to find and acquire land for whole groups of migrants, a movement reminiscent of the Jewish landseekers who, a hundred years earlier, made their way in the same manner toward Novorossiia. Sixteen different groups, a total of 775 families, founded new settlements in the region of Odessa between the cities of Balta and Odessa in the years 1922-1924. Another stream moved towards the Crimea. The initiators of the Crimean colonization were halutzim (See page 94) who had succeeded in leasing several abandoned estates from the Soviet Government. They were followed by regular migrants. Altogether 611 families, or 3,070 persons, settled on 20,180

dessiatins of land allotted to them. These settlers would have been unable to develop their undertaking had it not been for the considerable assistance extended by Jewish organizations abroad, the Agrojoint, the ORT and the JCA.

In the meantime the economic position of Russian Jewry continued to deteriorate, and the number of those anxious to migrate increased. In order to regulate this spontaneous movement, the government decided to take the task of Jewish colonization into its own hands. On August 29, 1924, it established the Komzet (Committee for Settling Jewish Laboring People on Land). The plan was to settle 100,000 Jewish families over a ten-year period on land to be assigned to them. Within a very short time, no less than 25,000 families had signed up.

In 1925, a second—purely Jewish—organization was founded, the Gezerd (the Yiddish name for the Society for Settling Jewish Laboring People on Land), to represent the non-communist elements of the Jewish community, with the purpose of assisting the Komzet in its work.

Of nearly 12,000 families thus settled, no less than 10,000 came to their new homes between 1925 and 1927. The larger part of the expenses involved during those three years was covered by Jewish organizations abroad, the remainder by the government. According to the official report of the Komzet, Jewish organizations contributed 9,500,000 rubles out of a total of 14,500,000 rubles.

In 1922 Dr. Frank Rosenblatt, who went to Russia on a relief mission as voluntary representative of the JDC (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee) and the ARA (American Relief Administration), initiated a relief program for the Jewish colonists in the Ukraine. As part of a larger rehabilitation program of the Reconstruction Department of the JDC, 85 tractors were purchased in the United States, tractor squads were formed and about 180,000 acres of land were plowed. Livestock was purchased and distributed among the

colonists, pure seed cultivation stations were established and foreign machinery and implements furnished, some five hundred families being thus assisted by the JDC to settle in agricultural colonies.

In 1924 the Agrojoint (American Jewish Joint Agricultural Corporation), created by the JDC, launched a large program of agricultural work among the Jews in Russia. In the fall of 1924, the Agrojoint concluded an agreement with the Soviet Government represented by the Komzet. According to this agreement, the Agrojoint had to submit its program to the Komzet, and thereafter became the sole and independent executors of its plans. Aside from the Agrojoint, there were other Jewish voluntary agencies in the field—JCA, ORT, OSE—but most of the newly planned settlements were directly supported and developed with the help of the Agrojoint. In the area allotted to new colonies, the Agrojoint took care of 65.2% to 65.4% of the population. According to Dr. Joseph Rosen, then chief Agrojoint representative there, the number of Jewish families engaged in farming in Russia increased "from a little over 15,000 in 1923 to more than 35,500 in 1927, while the acreage allotted to and occupied by Jewish settlers has risen from less than 400,000 to over a million acres during the same period."

The social composition of the settlers is evident from the following table which gives a typical cross-section. Among the Jews who settled in the Ukraine in 1926 there were:

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number of Colonists</i>	<i>Percentage of Total</i>
Farmers.....	189	15.4
Artisans and Factory Workers.....	749	61.1
White Collar Employees.....	82	8.0
Traders.....	146	11.1
Professional.....	12	1.0
Miscellaneous.....	42	3.4
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>1,220</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The new Jewish colonization was conducted in most cases on collectivist lines. In 1925 there were in the Ukraine 193 collective farms, most of which later disin-



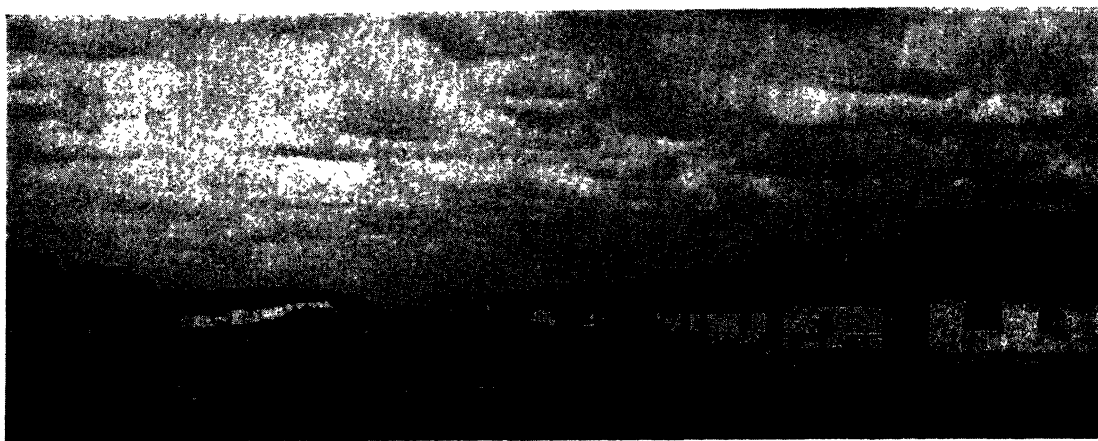
JEWISH GRAPE GROWERS IN A CRIMEAN COLONY

*Sovfoto*



POTATO DIGGING ON A JEWISH COLLECTIVE FARM

*Courtesy Joint Distribution Committee*



KALININDORF, A JEWISH VILLAGE IN THE UKRAINE

Sovfoto

tegrated. In Byelorussia, on the other hand, the collectivist form took root, so that by 1928 there were 169 Jewish collective farms. Generally speaking, land was allotted to the settlers in large areas. (In the Ukraine the land allotments were adjacent to the already existing Jewish colonies.) As a result, large Jewish settlements developed which were combined to create a number of "Jewish districts." In March 1927 such a Jewish district was created in the Kherson region, and further Jewish districts were later founded in Krivoi Rog and the region of Mariupol-Zaporozhie.

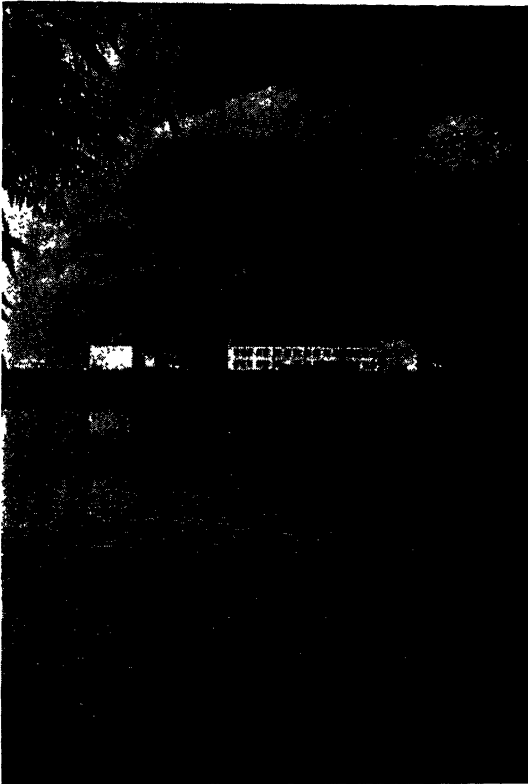
Jewish agricultural colonization in the Soviet Union was, from 1922 to 1927, ideologically linked to the idea of creating a closed Jewish colonization area in the Crimea. The Jewish press even hinted at the plan of a "Crimean Jewish Republic" within the USSR. A little later, however, a new plan emerged—that of Birobidjan.

According to the official data, the general position of the Jewish agriculture as of 1928 was as follows:

<i>Region</i>	<i>Number of Families</i>	<i>Area Allotted in Hectares</i>
Ukraine.....	7,251	165,334
Crimea.....	2,312	119,623
Byelorussia, including Homel.	1,727	20,560
R.S.F.S.R., the Caucasus and		
Daghestan.....	432	18,166
Uzbekistan.....	143	1,500
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>11,865</b>	<b>325,183</b>

The consideration of the Crimea versus Birobidjan engaged the attention of Russia's ruling circles during the years 1927-1929. The Crimean project was dropped and the Birobidjan plan ultimately adopted; the Soviet press never explained the reasons which led to the abandonment of the former project. In the meantime the Jewish colonization areas in the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Crimea lost their Jewish identity as a result of the Soviet policy of "complete collectivization" of all farms in the USSR (1929-31). For a time the Yevseksia (Jewish Section of the Communist Party) continued to maintain that the Jewish colonies would be exempted from forced collectivization and that state control of the Jewish settlements would be confined to the so-called "contractation" system (obligatory delivery of grain to the government at fixed prices). But the Soviet Government made no exception for any of the national minority groups.

Of all Jewish landowners in the Freidorf district (Crimea) 93.6% were collectivized, and in the Novo-Zlatopol district (Ukraine) the process of collectivization embraced 99.9% of all Jewish farms. The period of the first Five-Year Plans and of the collectivization was a hard one for the Jewish colonies in the Crimea, the Ukraine and elsewhere: "1932 and 1933 were years of bitter struggle against the collectivist economy in the Ukraine colonies" (semi-official



Soufoto

IN THE JEWISH NATIONAL DISTRICT  
OF STALINDORF, UKRAINE

report: *Jews in the USSR*, p. 208). A crisis occurred in 1931 in the Kalinindorf region (Ukraine) "as a result of which many of the young people left the colonies." O. Heller estimates that "a third of all colonists left the Crimea." According to Yakov Kantor, out of a total of 13,415 Jewish settlers in the Ukraine, 6,318 left their colonies in the years 1926-1931.

Two major causes were mainly responsible for this trend: the pulling power, particularly for the younger generation, of the fast-growing industries in the cities; secondly, the unfavorable impact of the forced collectivization policy. This impact became especially strong when the entire territory of Jewish colonization was collectivized.

The last official data on the position of the Jewish colonies in the Soviet Union were published in 1935. No further information is available, nor does the report of 1935 include Byelorussia.

In the Crimea, the total number of Jewish farmers was about 25,000. Of the 199,851 hectares of land available to the settlers, 137,152 were cultivated.

There were two Jewish "national districts" in the Crimea: (a) the Freidorf district, established in January 1931; (b) the Larindorf district, created at the beginning of 1933. In the Freidorf district there were 31 village Soviets, 15 of which represented 35 Jewish settlements; nine were mixed in their ethnic composition; the rest were German, Ukrainian and Russian. All in all, there were 92 collectivized settlements (*kolkhozes*), 36 of which were Jewish.

In the Ukraine there were three Jewish "national districts": (a) the Kalinindorf district, organized on March 22, 1927; land available—72,436 hectares; land cultivated—52,000 hectares (in 1933); of a total number of 47 collective settlements, 39 were Jewish, and there were 15 Jewish village Soviets; (b) the Novo-Zlatopol district: of the available 44,193 hectares of land, 38,667 were cultivated. In this district 1,791 Jewish families formed nine village Soviets out of a total of ten; there were 30 *kolkhozes*; (c) the Stalindorf district with a total land area of 101,550 hectares, of which 66,627 were cultivated; there were 15,500 Jews here in a total population of 30,000. Ten of the 23 Soviets were Jewish. There were in all 91 collectivized settlements.

As concerns Byelorussia, the latest available figures (1931) show that 10,900 Jewish families were settled there on an area of 74,800 hectares.

The official Yiddish newspaper *Emes* of October 9, 1937, published a table giving the total number of Jewish agricultural workers in the Soviet Union. If we add the data by L. Zinger computed on the basis of the census of 1939, we obtain the figures given in the Table on the following page.

This table shows that the trend toward farming among Russian Jewry reached its peak in 1929-30 on the eve of collectivization: some 300,000 Jews, more than 10% of the total Jewish population, lived by



farming. From 1930 onwards the number steadily decreased until by 1939 there were only 125,000 Jews engaged in agriculture

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Jews in Agriculture (in round figures)</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Jewish Population</i>
1917	52,758	2.2
1926-27	226,000	8.3
1929-30	300,000	10.1
1935	194,000	6.7
1939	125,000	5.8

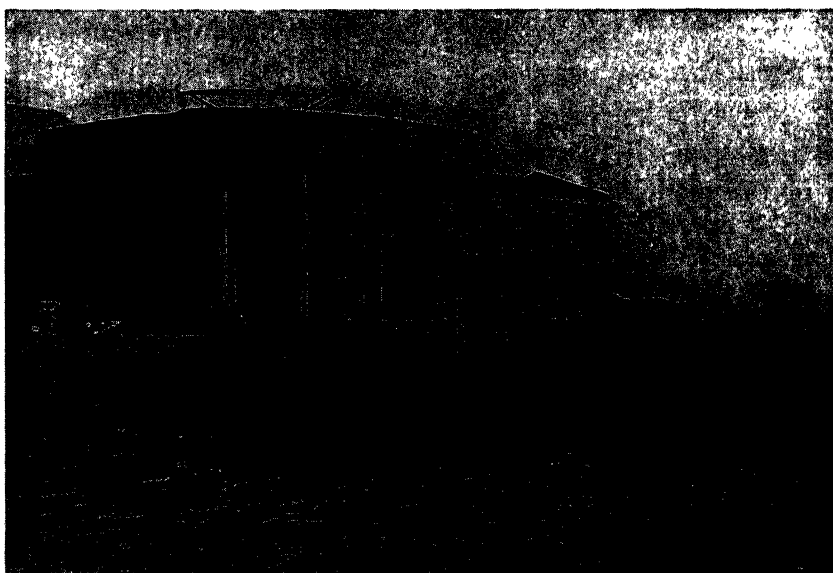
in the Soviet Union. No official figures after 1939 are available.

## 2. BIROBIDJAN

The most important experiment in Jewish agricultural colonization in the USSR is connected with the Birobidjan project. On March 28, 1928 the Soviet Government set apart the Far Eastern territory of Birobidjan as a special administrative district for Jewish colonization. Six years later, on May 7, 1934, this district was proclaimed

become a "Jewish National Republic." "For the first time in the history of the Jewish people," the decision stated, "its passionate hope for a country of its own, for national statehood is to be fulfilled . . . The Jewish Autonomous Region will become the center of the Jewish population in the Soviet Union." Article 22 of the Soviet Constitution of 1936 lists the "Jewish Autonomous Region" of Birobidjan among the other "National Regions" in the Soviet Union.

The territory in question is situated in the Far Eastern province of the USSR, in the Amur region on the border of Manchuria. The territory embraces approximately 36,000 square kilometers (14,000 sq. miles) within the southernmost bend of the middle part of the Amur, with the river as its southern and western borders. The tributaries of the Amur, Bira and Bidjan, cross the region from the north to the south while the Amur-Ussuri rail-

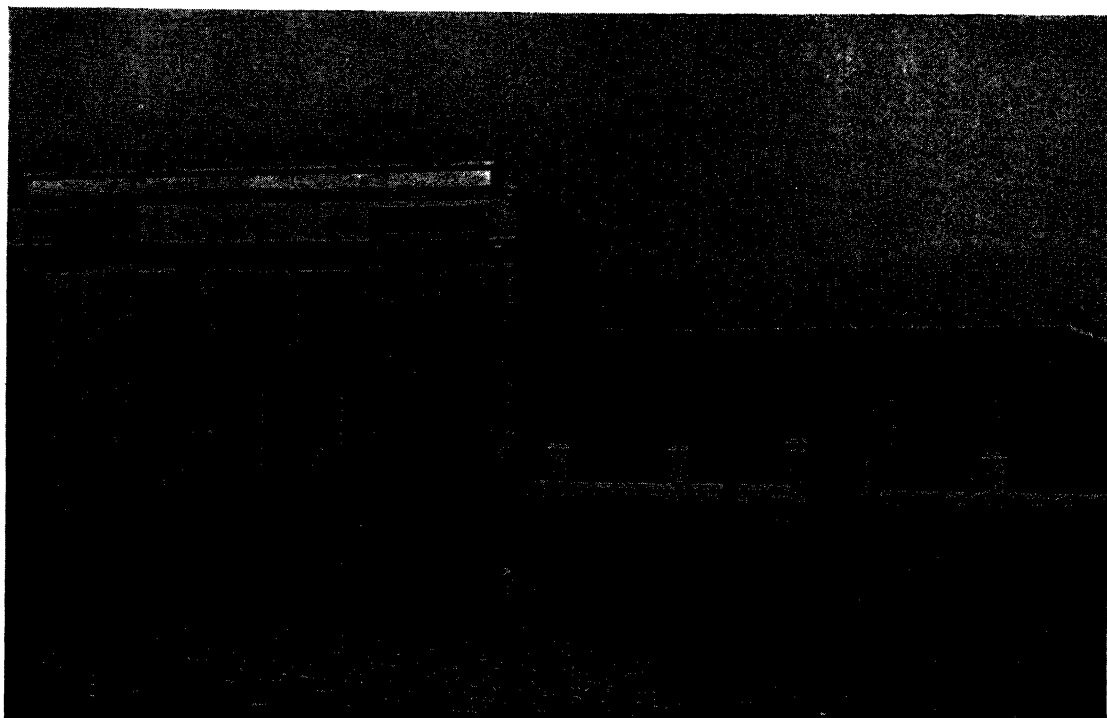


*Courtesy Joint Distribution Committee*

### CULTURAL CENTER IN THE JEWISH DISTRICT OF STALINDORF, UKRAINE

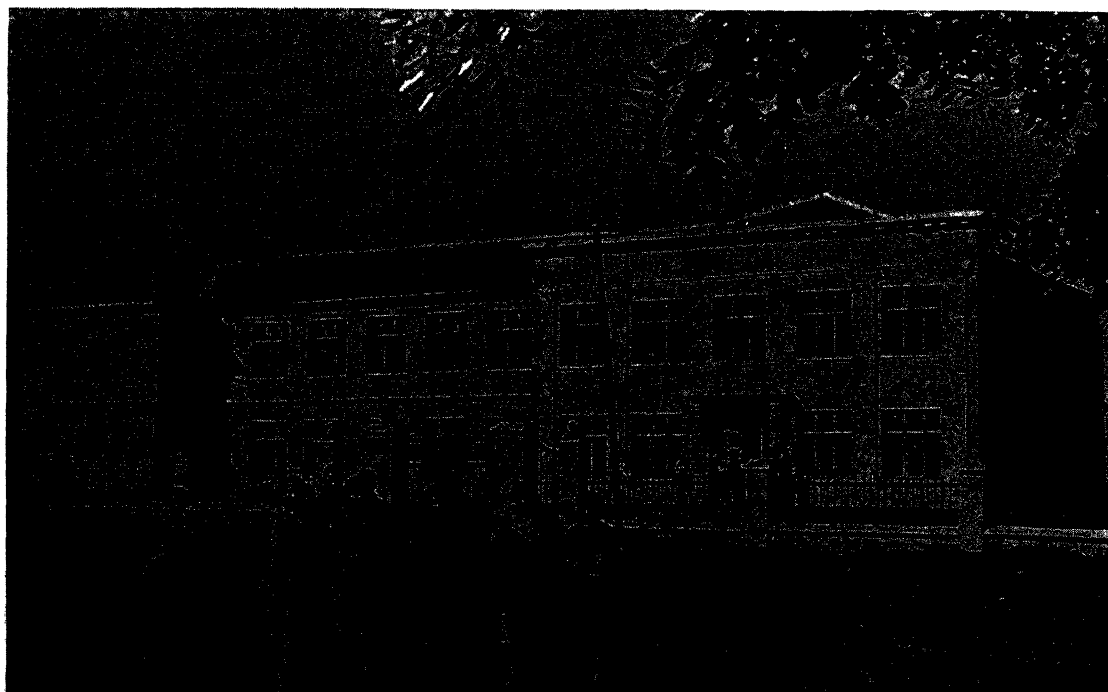
a "Jewish Autonomous Region" within the Far Eastern Territory, and on August 29, 1936 a special decision of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets announced that Birobidjan was eventually to

way cuts through the egg-shaped territory from the west to the east, from the town of Obluchie to the gates of Khabarovsk, which city itself is not included in the region.



CULTURAL CENTER IN THE JEWISH COLLECTIVE FARM "NAI LEBN", CRIMEA

*Sovfoto*

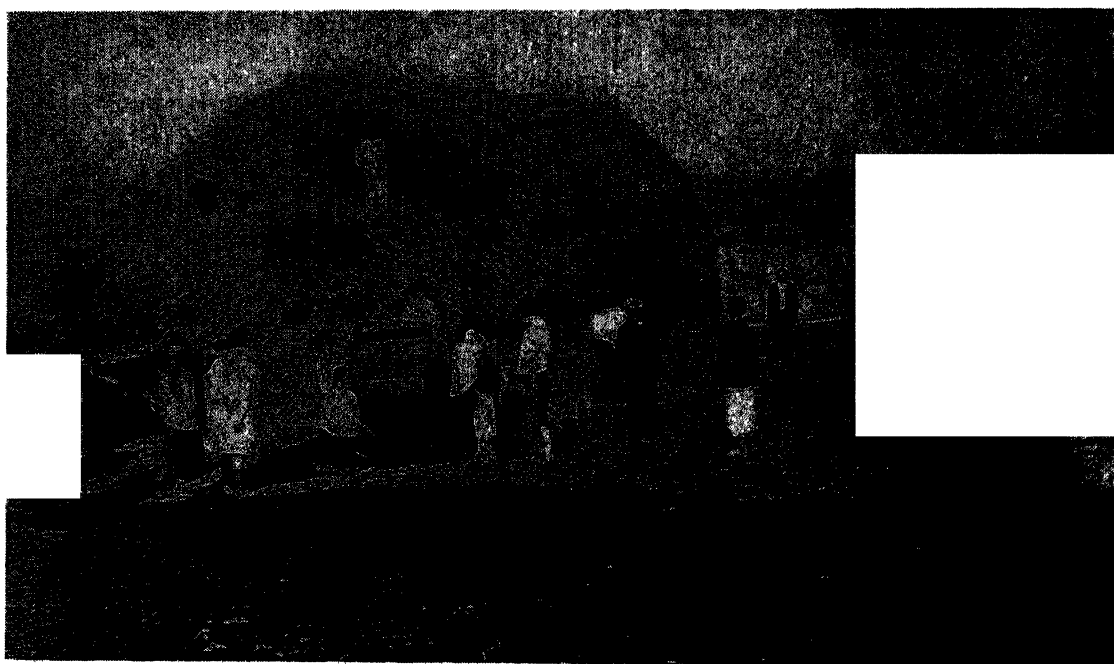


SECONDARY SCHOOL IN THE JEWISH COLLECTIVE FARM "NAI LEBN", CRIMEA

*Sovfoto*



FARMSTEAD IN A JEWISH COLONY IN THE UKRAINE



HAYING ON A JEWISH FARM IN THE UKRAINE

The greater part of the mountainous territory, especially in the North-East, is covered with thick virgin forests; large areas consist of swamps, but there is also a sufficient amount of arable virgin soil. The climate is very severe. The winter is harsh, snowy and long; the Amur is frozen from the end of November to the end of April. The summer is short, very humid and hot, with swollen rivers, floods and clouds of flies and mosquitoes. Wheat, oats, barley, soybeans, summer rye and potatoes can be raised there. The woods are rich in oak, pine, cedar and other timber which can be exploited industrially. There are also considerable mineral resources: iron ore, graphite, magnesite, coal and gold.

The principal city is Birobidjan (formerly the station called Tikhonkaya) on the railway line to Khabarovsk. The population of the region in 1928 consisted of 34,000 persons, 10% of whom were Korean, 78.4% Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian immigrants from European Russia, and 11.6% belonging to various tribes and nationalities—Chinese among them.

The first Jewish migrants, numbering 650 from Kazan, Minsk and Smolensk, arrived in Birobidjan in April-June 1929.

Statistical data, as far as they can be found, in the Yiddish press of the Soviet Union, indicated a total of 19,635 Jewish immigrants in Birobidjan during the years 1929-1933. But there was also a constant stream of Jewish departures from the region: more than 10,000 decided to leave Birobidjan for other parts of the USSR. In the subsequent years Jewish immigration into Birobidjan developed as follows (round figures):

Year	Number of Immigrants
1929	5,000
1930	6,200
1931	5,000
1932	3,000

In 1933 a radical change in the Jewish administration of the region took place, and the old leadership (Liberberg, Havkin, Volobrinisky and others) was removed. Ac-

cording to a report of the State Planning Board of Birobidjan, published in the Communist newspaper *Emes* of June 3, 1937, 28% of the total population of 76,500 were Jewish, which would indicate that some 18,000 Jews lived there at that time. (The semi-official estimate was 29,000.) No official account is available of the development of Jewish immigration after 1937.

The official figures of the 1939 census—the latest official data available—give the entire population of Birobidjan as 108,419, of whom 71,634 lived in the city and 36,785 lived in the villages. The number of Jews was not specified.

Official figures on the emigration of Jews from Birobidjan are not available. But according to statements published in the Communist press, it must have been considerable in the years 1936-37 (*Emes*, May 1937). Thus, the original plan of bringing 100,000 Jews into Birobidjan during the ten-year period of 1928-38 evidently did not materialize. This may be the explanation for the dismissal of Birobidjan Jewry's second group of leaders, such as Yakov Levin, Katel and Heller, and of the leaders of the Gezerd (Dimanstein, Merezhin, Litvakov and others).

The Jewish Republic in Birobidjan was to be based on a class of Jewish farmers organized in kolkhozes. Many causes, however, climatic conditions among them, made it impossible to live up to these expectations. An official report for 1937 states that there were 15 kolkhozes in the Birobidjan region with only about 500 Jewish families. The exact number was not known, according to *Emes* of July, 1937. The same paper stated that the majority of the kolkhoz members were people who had never before done agricultural work, and that there were no agricultural experts to instruct them.

In the meantime, a process of industrialization began in the region. New factories and plants were built, such as metal works, woodwork and furniture shops and clothing factories. The population shifted rapidly from agriculture to industry. In the



GRAIN SORTING ON A JEWISH COLLECTIVE FARM IN BIROBIDJAN

*Sovfoto*

JEWISH LUMBER WORKERS IN BIROBIDJAN



WALDHEIM, A JEWISH COLLECTIVE FARM IN BIROBJIDJAN

Sovfoto

city of Birobidjan the majority of the immigrants went into industry, the crafts, the professions and cultural activities. In 1939, out of a total of 60 kolkhozes, only 18 were Jewish.

It was obvious that the masses of Soviet Jewry were for one reason or another not prepared to leave their homes in European Russia for the new national home on the banks of the Amur. For a time it seemed that the government might be ready to admit to Birobidjan Jewish immigrants from other countries, such as Poland and Lithuania. But this plan was abandoned toward the end of 1937.

The Birobidjan region was planned as a Jewish National Republic not only in the sense that the majority of the population should consist of Jews, but on the assumption that the official language, the language of education and all cultural activities would be Yiddish. Actually, however, the dominant language in administration and even in the schools has been Russian. In 1936, out of 15 Jewish kolkhozes

only two used Yiddish as their official language. At the conference of Jewish cultural workers, in August 1938, it was stated by officials that at the Medical College and at the Railway Training School the courses were conducted in Russian while Yiddish and Jewish literature were often ignored "owing to the lack of specialists." There is a Yiddish daily newspaper in Birobidjan, the *Birobidjaner Shtern* (Birobidjan Star), and from 1936 to 1940 there appeared a Yiddish quarterly, *Forpost* (Vanguard). There is also a Yiddish state theatre.

In 1938, the Gezerd was dissolved and the activities of all foreign Jewish organizations, such as the Agrojoint and the ORT were discontinued. At the same time, the government's appropriations for the strategic region of Birobidjan steadily rose:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Rubles</i>
1934	12,266,000
1938	39,180,000
1939	46,500,000
1940	70,000,000

By the eve of World War II, the Birobidjan project for the establishment of a Jewish National Republic with a Jewish majority and Yiddish culture had still not materialized. During the war and first post-war period there was hardly any appreciable new immigration into Birobidjan.

In the latter part of 1947, a fresh campaign for settlement there was initiated. According to *Einikeit* (Unity), the official organ of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, some 4,000 Ukrainian and Byelorussian Jews were then preparing to leave for Birobidjan.

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# JEWISH COLONIZATION IN THE AMERICAS

## I. JEWISH FARMING IN THE UNITED STATES

H. Frank

1. Early Experiments
2. The Nineteen Twenties
3. Developments Since 1930
4. The Situation in Various States
5. Recent Developments and General Conclusions

### 1. EARLY EXPERIMENTS

The early eighties of the 19th century, which marked the beginning of mass Jewish immigration to America, saw the beginning of a movement which was to result in the settlement of a considerable number of Jews as farmers. There were many young idealists among these immigrants who brought with them the dream of founding farm communities conducted in a spirit of comradeship and equality. Certain groups, as, for example, the *Am Olam*, even envisaged the possibility of founding a Jewish state in some remote part of the United States, as had once been proposed by Mordecai Manuel Noah (1785-1851). Although a few communes were started, none of them lasted, in part because these pioneers lacked both farm training and experience.

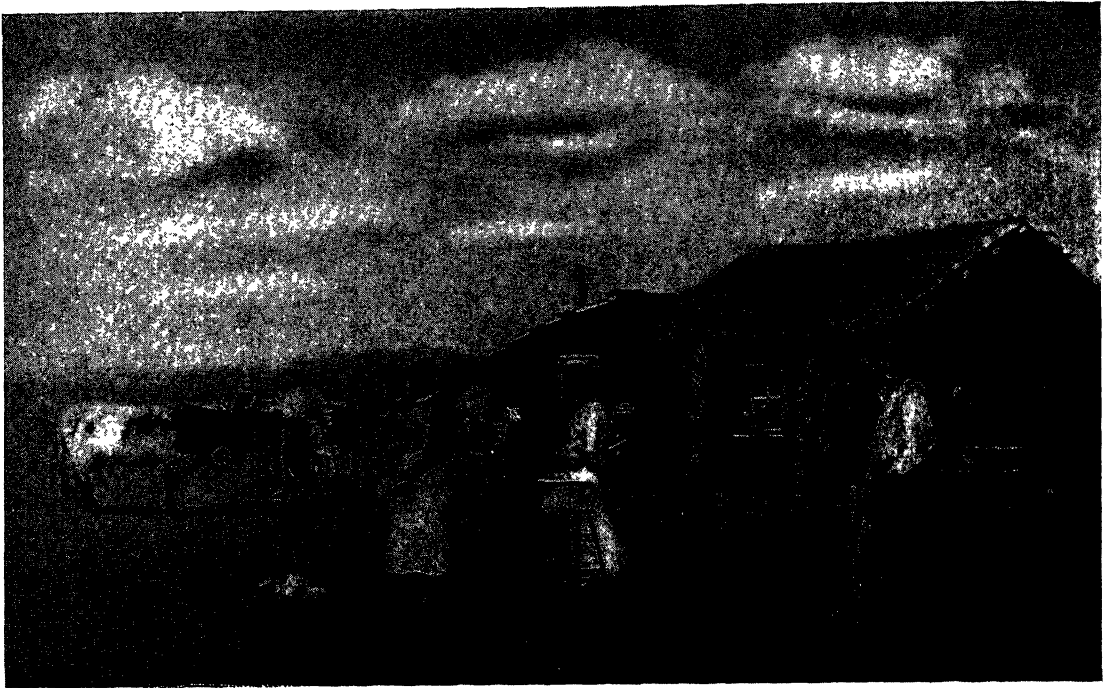
Between 1886 and 1901 several attempts were made by the Jewish Colonization Association, with funds supplied by Baron de Hirsch, to shift poor immigrant families from the cities (New York, Philadelphia, etc.) to the country. Several Jewish villages were founded in southern New Jersey (Carmel, Alliance, Norma, Rosenhayn, etc.), and at Woodbine, N.J., an agro-indus-

trial community was launched. Many of the settlers left these villages after a year or two, and the others turned to tailoring and shopkeeping. Only a small number adapted themselves, with a great deal of effort and hardship, to the local type of farming, chiefly the growing of fruit and vegetables. The failure of these experiments was primarily due to the inexperience of the settlers, and the bureaucratic methods of the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA).

In 1892, Woodbine, the largest community, had 60 Jewish farmer families; in 1901 there were 52 and eight years later there were not many more, although 94% of the town's population of 2,300 was Jewish. In 1894 an agricultural school was opened in Woodbine, under the supervision of the agricultural expert, Hirsh Leib Sabsovich (1860-1915).

The experiment of settling urban Jews on the land under philanthropic auspices was completely discredited. On the other hand, during the first decade of the 20th century, a considerable number of Jewish families, who turned to farming independently, achieved a degree of success. Since 1901 the Baron de Hirsch Foundation has functioned primarily through the Jewish Agricultural Society (J.A.S.) founded in 1900 in New York, with branches in other cities, for the purpose of aiding Jewish families who turned to farming on their own initiative. The Society grants loans, and offers expert advice and information on agricultural problems. The Society's





*Courtesy Jewish Agricultural Society*

FARMSTEAD OF A JEWISH SETTLER IN THE LASKER COLONY, KANSAS, 1885

colonization department advises prospective buyers of farms and its employment department places young men as seasonal workers and as farm hands. The Society has also shown an interest in the co-operative enterprises of the farmers, such as credit unions and insurance coverage. Since 1908 it has also published a monthly journal, "The Jewish Farmer," in English and Yiddish.

## 2. THE NINETEEN TWENTIES

The city-dweller can adapt himself only with great difficulty to the hard life and the lower living-standard of the farmer. More often than not, a Jewish family has turned to farming without adequate capital. There is, nevertheless, a type of successful farmer who, thanks to his initiative, energy, and previous experience in Europe, manages to attain a certain degree of economic prosperity. On the other hand, one can find many Jewish farmers who, for lack of experience and capital, eke out a scant living. The latter must supplement their work in garden and field by other activities,

such as taking in summer guests. Close to 60% of Jewish farmers, however, have been on their farms for 10 years or more and derive their livelihood chiefly from agriculture.

A statistical picture of the farmers who received loans from the Jewish Agricultural Society in 1924 is given in its report for that year. These loans totalled \$310,535, an average of \$674 per borrower.

## 3. DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1930

During the depression of the thirties many Jewish workers moved to the suburbs where they began to raise vegetables and poultry. Several attempts have indeed been made by groups of workers from New York and other cities to set up larger co-operatives in various parts of the country, patterned after the *kvutzot* in Palestine, such as Clarion in Utah (founded just before World War I) and Sunrise in Michigan, founded in 1932.

The Clarion experiment was especially instructive. Although 150 families from New York and Philadelphia were to be

settled on 6,000 acres in the state of Utah, the settlement never much exceeded 50 persons. At first it was planned to raise grain and alfalfa, but later the group decided to include dairy products and poultry. The growing of grain and alfalfa in Utah is based on artificial irrigation. After much hardship the settlers, though unaccustomed to this method of farming, acquired notable skill in it. The Clarion experiment failed despite all efforts, owing primarily to lack of leadership and poor administration.

Far more successful were the "garden towns" established in the proximity of the large cities. Some 25 of these were founded in the vicinity of New York (Stelton, N.J., Chatham, Mohegan, etc.), by Jewish and some non-Jewish workers. In these suburban communities the residents conduct co-operatively several economic and cultural enterprises, such as stores, schools, etc., but from the purely agricultural standpoint these groups have scarcely any importance.

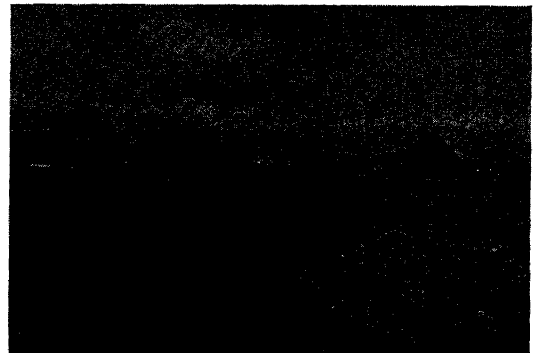
Much hope was placed in the government project of 1934 which established an agro-industrial colony in central New Jersey for unemployed Jewish workers from New York and Philadelphia, the so-called Jersey Homesteads colony, some 50 miles south of New York. This was part of the Roosevelt plan to settle some of the urban unemployed on the land. It was intended that the settlers should work at their old trades but under improved conditions. The government allocated some \$2,000,000 to the project; 200 homes with modern conveniences were built and a modern clothing factory employing 150 men and women was established. The down-payment for membership in the co-operative was \$500 per family.

The project, however, was strongly opposed by the large unions, which had always been against any transfer of their trades from New York to small towns, thus removing them from their jurisdiction. By the summer of 1938, there were no more than 120 families living in the settlement,

and their economic situation was rather insecure. Toward the end of 1944 there were 180 Jewish and 15 non-Jewish families in Jersey Homesteads, (the name has since been changed to Roosevelt). Only five families depended on general farming, and five others on poultry raising as their sole source of income. The remaining families had at best gardens and orchards of varying size, and found employment in New York, Philadelphia, Trenton, Freehold and Lakewood.

The growth of the Jewish farm population has been checked partly by the fact that prospective farmers have, as a rule, little knowledge of the value of farm land and of other cardinal principles of a farm economy and are therefore often victimized by brokers. Another complication is the tendency to combine farming with the summer-resort business. While this combination is likely to improve the financial position of the farmer, it is of necessity a hindrance to farming because the summer is precisely the season when the fields require the farmers fullest attention and effort.

The Second World War gave considerable impetus to American agriculture in general and Jewish farming in particular. The American farmer achieved a volume of production unprecedented in the country's agricultural history. Jewish farmers, like others, adapted themselves to the rigors of a war economy and were able to produce more, even in the face of serious shortages



*Courtesy H. Frank*

THE JEWISH COLONY CLARION, UTAH

of labor and commodities. The sustained trend of rising prices of all kinds of farm produce furnished a strong incentive to city-dwellers to take up agricultural pursuits.

During the years 1933-47, approximately 5,000 refugees applied to the Jewish Agricultural Society's offices; approximately 12,000 individual consultations were held, and 546 families were settled on farms in California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina and Virginia. At the end of 1947, 469 of these families were still on their farms. Loans to the extent of \$747,268, were granted by the J.A.S., while \$92,988 were lent by other agencies. Of a total \$840,256, the greater part, \$561,193, has already been repaid, much of it before the date of maturity.

#### 4. THE SITUATION IN VARIOUS STATES

The states with the largest Jewish farming population are Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Michigan and Ohio. In Connecticut, besides the famous Colchester colony which was founded in 1891 and still constitutes an active agricultural community, we find the main Jewish centers around Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, New London, Norwich and Middletown. These farms carry on dairying, poultry raising, vegetable and fruit growing. The Connecticut River Valley contains fertile areas suited for tobacco-growing, but many Jewish farmers have turned from tobacco to potatoes.

New Jersey was the cradle of the Jewish farm movement, but only the settlements in the southern part of that state have survived. They were originally developed as truck farms (strawberries, beans, sweet potatoes, pepper). Later poultry raising was introduced and is at present the principal source of income. Newcomers, mostly refugees from Central Europe, have erected modern poultry plants. In Cumberland County there are plants with a capacity of

from 1,000 to 10,000 fowl. The older farms in Woodbine have also received a fresh impetus from poultry raising. There are agro-industrial settlements around New Brunswick, Plainfield and Bound Brook, and others in the vicinity of Lakewood, Toms River and Farmingdale. Jewish farmers around Freehold, Perrineville and Englishtown produce large crops of potatoes, tomatoes and other vegetables. Moreover, they have developed a number of strong, co-operative organizations for the purchasing of supplies, for the marketing of their produce (eggs, poultry, vegetables) and for production (feed-mills, etc.). They have also formed credit unions.

In the state of New York, which since 1900 has had the densest Jewish rural population in the country, Jewish farming has been concentrated mainly in Sullivan and Ulster counties. Because of the scenic beauty of these counties, many popular resorts sprang up there, and in the course of time the sometimes luxurious resorts overshadowed their owners' agricultural activities. Yet a considerable volume of farming is still being carried on in this territory; while dairying predominates, poultry, potatoes and cauliflower are also produced on a commercial scale by Jewish farmers.

In the Catskill Mountain district of New York State many large centers, such as Woodbridge, South Fallsburg, Ellenville, Liberty and Monticello, have a considerable Jewish population which is at least partly engaged in farming. There are also groups of Jewish farmers in Rensselaer County around Nassau, East Nassau, Schodack and Brainard. Within the last decade Rockland County, as well as the region around Binghamton, Middletown and Catskill have received new Jewish farmers from the ranks of the refugees. Under the influence of the newcomers fresh impetus was given to the colonies established between 1910 and 1920 in the vicinity of Syracuse, Utica and Rochester. Before and during World War I the local farmers had developed a large production of grain and

hay, which later considerably declined. The introduction of diversified farming has more recently improved the condition of the farmers in this district.

In 1945 the Jewish Agricultural Society discontinued its Ulster-Sullivan Branch in Ellenville, N. Y., which had been functioning since 1920. These districts, which a quarter of a century ago contained the densest Jewish rural population in the United States, have in the meantime developed their own leadership and communal services. Good roads and the abundant use of cars have diminished the distance to the larger cities; the "mountains" which have become almost a suburb of New York City, can now be assisted directly from the Society's headquarters.

Although this "mountainous region" has been the summer resort area for multitudes of New Yorkers, many outstanding farming enterprises are still to be found there. A second generation of Jewish farmers, some of them graduates of agricultural schools, are working alongside of their parents or on their own farms. A third generation is beginning to grow up. In general, farming, in most cases formerly only a supplement to the summer-hotel business, is now more balanced and more diversified. (The bulk of farmers is, however, engaged in dairy-farming, the branch most suited to the climate and topography of the region.) Co-operatives and credit unions have been organized, and community centers set up.

In Michigan early experiments in Jewish farming, which began with the famous Palestine Colony in 1891 and were continued later by Rabbi A. R. Lewy of Chicago, with his Jewish Agriculturists Aid Society, left behind them Jewish farmers near practically every larger city, especially in southwestern Michigan. The Jewish farmers of South Haven developed general farming, supplemented by taking in boarders. In the neighborhood of Benton Harbor, one of the largest fruit and vegetable markets in the United States, the Jews specialized in these crops. For many years now,

a Mid-Western office of the J.A.S. has functioned in Chicago.

In Ohio the Jewish farm settlements are grouped around Cleveland and Youngstown. The largest group is in the neighborhood of Geneva, some 45 miles from Cleveland. These Jewish farmers, who started about thirty years ago, are engaged in viticulture. After a period of depression they turned to diversified farming with favorable results.

California is one of the newest and most promising states to attract and hold the attention of prospective Jewish farmers. To cater to this trend, a Western States office of the J.A.S. was opened in Los Angeles in June 1945. During the first 18 months of its existence 204 persons sought its advice and 881 office consultations were held. Nearly all the applicants came from city occupations and lacked experience. The young men, especially the veterans, were advised by this office to work on farms first to gain experience, or to enter agricultural schools so as to qualify for the liberal aid given to veterans by the State of California. This is limited, however, to permanent residents. Since its inception, the J.A.S. office has dealt with 440 applicants, and by the end of 1947, 58 families were established on farms. Eight of them were refugee families and 11, veteran families. Since 1945 there has been a continuous rise in farm land prices, and many applicants were advised to postpone their plans for a more propitious time. However, in Fontana, So. California, where 29 families had settled, only 2 yielded to the lure of high prices. The plans laid out for the newcomers have embraced a combination of activities: poultry farming, citrus-growing, the development of possibilities for direct local sales, as e.g., roadside stands, and the promotion of part-time farming, for which these regions seem to be particularly suitable.

##### 5. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The part-time farm plan, as regards the Jew in American agriculture, is, on the

whole, a recent development. It proved its soundness during the depression after 1929. At that time, many part-time farmers were able to continue because of supplementary incomes from non-agricultural jobs, while full-time farmers not unseldom succumbed. Having at first been treated with scorn, these part-time farmers now became the envy of the others. Federal agencies, that had heretofore shunned the part-time farmer, now made him eligible for loans (J.A.S. Annual Report 1946).

As to the settlement of veterans on farms, their number is so far modest. Government credits are liberal, but are contingent upon conditions such as ample previous experience and training, not easily found among Jewish city-dwellers. The J.A.S. has, however, learned through the years—especially since the arrival of refugees—that men without previous training or experience can become successful farmers. The J.A.S. has in recent years shown that the process of training and settlement can be reversed, by settling the man first and then teaching him properly on his own farm.

By the end of 1947, altogether 552 veterans (among them also non-Jews sent to the J.A.S. by some non-Jewish agencies), most of them without funds, were given advice and assistance. Progress has been slow, for the Society has not been able to undertake the entire financial burden. It has, however, still further liberalized its already liberal loaning terms. Thus far (January 1948) 72 veterans have been settled on the land.

The progress of the "back-to-the-land" movement of American Jewry cannot be expressed in exact figures. In 1927 Dr. H. S. Linfield, who made an investigation for the American Jewish Committee, came to the conclusion that there were at that time 109,600 Jews living in rural districts. Gabriel Davidson, Managing Director of the Jewish Agricultural Society, estimates in his recent book, *Our Jewish Farmers* (1943), that 80,000-100,000 American Jews derive their living wholly or in part from various branches of agricultural activity.

He estimates the total Jewish farm holdings as approximately 1,000,000 acres, and the total gross value of these holdings, including personal property (disregarding mortgages) as \$150,000,000.

Some interesting data may be cited from the study made in 1935 by the Jewish Agricultural Society among 300 farmers in 17 states, who were considered as representing a fairly characteristic cross-section of the Jewish farming population. This study showed that almost 60% of the farmers were under 50 years of age, the largest age group (35%) comprised persons between 40 and 50, and only 10% were over 60. Among the group studied, 81% had been in the United States twenty years or more; 4% were American-born and only a fraction of 1% had been in the country less than 10 years. Since 1935 the influx of refugees has undoubtedly caused an increase in the last-mentioned category.

The former occupations of Jewish farmers cover a wide range. Among them are one-time unskilled laborers, skilled workers, white-collar employees, merchants, manufacturers as well as professionals. The largest group, 28%, came from the needle and fur trades, while former farmers and farm hands accounted for 7%. Of the group studied in 1935, 61% turned to farming not for economic reasons but because they preferred "to live close to nature."

As to the various types of farming, the available data indicate the following distribution: 33% were in general farming; 32% in poultry raising; 18% in dairying; 10% in truck farming. Close to 50% had supplemental sources of income, such as boarders or roomers, etc.

The capital investment of the average Jewish farmer is rather small as compared with that of the average American farmer; many Jews went into farming without adequate capital. Nevertheless, figures show that the persistence of the Jewish farmer was striking. Sixty-nine percent of Jewish farmers had lived on their property over ten years and 22%, over twenty years.

Apart from perseverance in a chosen pursuit, the stable character of the Jewish farmer may be attributed to the fact that life on these farms is fairly comfortable. In 1935, 76% had sanitary plumbing, 82% had electricity and 52% had furnace heat—a much higher percentage than on the non-Jewish farms. This can be explained in part by the fact that the Jews had been accustomed to these facilities before taking to farm life, in part by the necessity to provide the summer boarders with modern comforts.

In regard to geographic distribution, the great majority of Jewish farmers were located in the Northeast and the Middle West, conforming to the general distribution of the Jewish population in the United States. There is no type of agricultural activity practised in the country which is not found among them: dairying, poultry raising, truck farming, horticulture, orchard-

ing, viticulture, cattle breeding, and the growing of tobacco, grain, cotton and sugar beet.

Some Jewish farmers are said to be among the very best in their respective fields. Here are a few examples (cited by a 1946 leaflet of the Jewish Agricultural Society). In Maine, a Jewish farmer is among the largest potato-growers in the country. A former New York East Sider is a leading vegetable-grower on Long Island. In New Jersey, a Jewish settler has become an outstanding dairyman. In Connecticut, another has attained international prominence as a breeder of poultry. In South Dakota, a seedgrower who furnished alfalfa seed to President Roosevelt's farm, went into farming with the help of Baron de Hirsch's Agricultural School. A once penniless immigrant is now the owner and successful operator of an 8,000 acre farm in California.

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## II. CANADA

Louis Rosenberg

Although the earliest Jewish immigrants settled in Eastern Canada, the first Jewish farm settlements were established not in the older provinces but on the virgin prairies of Western Canada. The Dominion's "Land Acts" of 1872 and 1884 offered 160 acres of free undeveloped land to any adult male or head of a family who would, within a period of three years after filing his application, erect a house and barn and put at least 40 acres of it under cultivation. The transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway, completed in 1886, made it possible for settlers to reach the free lands offered to them. The Jewish Colonization Association (1891) furnished the encouragement and financial assistance necessary to enable the pioneer Jewish settlers to build their homes and purchase essential livestock and farm equipment.

The first Jewish farm settlement was founded in 1882 by the Russo-Jewish Committee of London. It was near Moosomin, in what was then known as the North West Territories, and subsequently became the Province of Saskatchewan. Handicapped by the lack of farming experience, proper supervision and nearby markets, this settlement had only a brief existence. Between 1892 and 1906, however, a number of other settlements were launched, which have had an uninterrupted history to the present day.

The five major Jewish settlements in Canada are Hirsch (1892), Lipton (1901), Edenbridge (1906) and Sonnenfeld (1906), all in the Province of Saskatchewan; and Rumsey (1906) in the Province of Alberta. There are also two small farm colonies at St. Sophie and New Glasgow in the Prov-

ince of Quebec, which were founded in 1905.

In addition to these five settlements, there were in 1945 several smaller groups and a number of individual farmers scattered throughout the country. The majority of the farmers in the settlements had received guidance and loans from the Jewish Colonization Association, and their holdings ranged from 320 to 1,440 acres. About three-fourths of the Jewish farmers in Canada are engaged in mixed farming, while the remainder, particularly those living nearer the larger centers of population, specialize in dairy farming, poultry raising and truck farming.

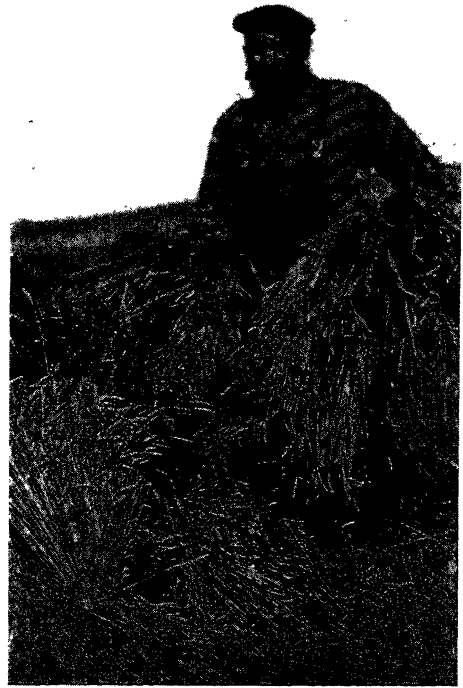
The average farm in the five main settlements consists of 420 acres, with 95 acres sown to wheat, 25 acres to oats and 50 acres to other coarse grains; 70 acres are left fallow each summer. The uncultivated land is used as pasture. The average farm investment is \$9,500, of which land and buildings account for \$7,000, livestock for \$1,250 and machinery and equipment for \$1,250. The livestock generally consists of eight work horses, five beef cattle, four milch cows and approximately 100 chickens. The farmer in these farm settlements usually works his land with the help of one son or a hired hand during the spring and harvest seasons.

Although almost all the farmers in the settlements are members of co-operative marketing associations and some of co-operative consumers' and credit societies, the farms are individually owned and operated. The average settlement consists of 20 farmers, each living on his own farm within a radius of three miles from the center of

the colony. The group maintains its own religious and community facilities, and at the same time takes an active part in agricultural and civic activities together with neighbors of Anglo-Saxon, Ukrainian, and Scandinavian origin. None of the five enumerated farm colonies is of the compact village type common in Europe or Palestine.

In 1939 two hundred Jewish refugee families from Czechoslovakia, Germany and Poland were admitted to Canada as farmers. While some brought sufficient funds of their own, the majority arrived with little more than \$1,000, which they had succeeded in transferring to Canada. Upon arrival, suitable farms were found for them near Hamilton and London in Ontario, near Montreal in Quebec, and near Winnipeg in Manitoba, by the Committee for Refugees of the Canadian Jewish Congress, which also assisted with loans to purchase the necessary livestock and equipment. The majority of these refugee settlers have since done well.

Between 1911 and 1941 the number of



*Courtesy Louis Rosenberg*

JEWISH FARMER AT HARVEST TIME IN  
SONNENFELD, SASKATCHEWAN

### JEWES ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE IN CANADA, 1931 AND 1941

<i>Province</i>	<i>NUMBER</i>		<i>FARMERS</i>		<i>LABORERS</i>	
	<i>1931</i>	<i>1941</i>	<i>1931</i>	<i>1941</i>	<i>1931</i>	<i>1941</i>
Maritime Provinces.....	14	16	8	14	6	2
Quebec.....	92	111	51	69	41	42
Ontario.....	132	283	71	152	61	131
Manitoba.....	141	155	86	103	55	52
Saskatchewan.....	309	192	196	140	113	52
Alberta.....	66	74	48	55	18	19
British Columbia.....	24	17	18	12	6	5
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>303</b>

Jewish farm-owners in Canada increased from 505 to 545. While the number of farmers living in Jewish farm settlements during the same 30-year period fell from 405 to 143, individual Jewish farmers scattered elsewhere increased from 100 in 1911 to 402 in 1941.

The majority of the farmers in the Jewish settlements were born in Europe and came to Canada before 1911. Canadian-born Jews, or Jews who had lived in

Canada for many years before becoming farmers, were more inclined than new arrivals to settle on scattered farms among non-Jews. Nevertheless, it is the farmers in the organized settlements, where the facilities for Jewish community life are available, who have shown the greater stability; the scattered Jewish farmers are more easily affected by fluctuating economic conditions and the social and cultural needs of their families.





*Courtesy Louis Rosenberg*

JEWISH FARMER IN SONNENFELD, SASKATCHEWAN

There are no longer any large tracts of free virgin farm lands available for settlement in Canada. There are, of course, considerable areas of undeveloped, unoccupied land in possession of some of the Provincial Governments in Canada, but these lands are largely submarginal in quality. They are situated far from railroads and well settled areas, and have been withdrawn from settlement by the Provincial Governments on the ground that the poor quality

of the soil or lack of sufficient rainfall render them at present unsuitable for general farming purposes.

The future development of Jewish farm settlements would appear to tend toward small groups located near the larger Jewish urban centers in Eastern Canada, and specializing in the production of dairy, poultry and garden products, marketed co-operatively and directly to consumers in the nearby cities.

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### III. ARGENTINA

#### I. N. Steinberg

1. First Period (1889-1904)
2. The Second Period (since 1904)
3. Summary

##### 1. FIRST PERIOD (1889-1904)

Jewish colonization in Argentina had its inception even prior to the founding of the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) by Baron Maurice de Hirsch. Under the pressure of Tsarist persecutions and the influence of early Zionist ideas, many Jewish families were eager to leave Russia and settle on the land elsewhere. In 1889, 120 families at Kamenets-Podolsk accepted the Argentine Government's offer of free transportation and cheap land. Working on the estates of landowners in the province of Santa Fé, the immigrants attracted the attention of Dr. W. Loewenthal, who, on behalf of Baron de Hirsch, was studying the possibilities of the colonization of Jews in Argentina. Convinced of their ability to adapt themselves to agricultural work, Dr. Loewenthal induced Baron de Hirsch to commence his great colonization project without delay. In this way, a group of 800 Russian Jews became the pioneers of agrarian colonization in Argentina.

Baron de Hirsch's aim was to liberate the Russian Jews from oppression and to prove that Jews were capable of productive labor. He envisioned the transfer of not less than a million Jews to Argentina within a period of 25 years. In 1891 he founded the JCA with a capital of £2,000,000, a sum which he later increased to £10,000,000. The shares were distributed among the Jewish communities of Berlin, Frankfort and Brus-

sels, the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Paris and the Anglo-Jewish Association in London. These various bodies elected an executive council as their policy-making body. Actually, the management of all JCA activities was concentrated in the hands of a few paid officials, the directors.

Since the JCA was financially independent, it was not subject to the control of Jewish public opinion. Its directors reported only to the executive council, which in turn published a short annual report containing no financial or business details. According to Article 3 of its Charter, the main task of the JCA was: "To assist and promote the emigration of Jews from any parts of Europe or Asia, and principally from countries in which they may for the time being be subjected to any special taxes or political or other disabilities, to any other parts of the world, and to form and establish colonies in various parts of North and South America and other countries for agricultural, commercial and other purposes."

The Baron de Hirsch project aroused great enthusiasm among all sections of the Jewish people. Many were prepared to regard the project as the beginning of the redemption. Scores of Russian Jews were caught by the "Argentine fever," and emigrated without waiting for the necessary preparations to be concluded. As early as August 1891, 300 families landed in Argentina and were followed by another 200 a few months later. By the end of 1893, 3,000 Jews had arrived, including the pioneers of 1889; 4,500 more immigrated, during 1894-95.

The colonists were beset by great difficulties. They had come to a country with an unfamiliar climate, and still virgin soil; no roads connected their settlements with the cities. Even their lives were in danger. Many years of desperate struggle with nature were needed before the land was conquered. Throughout the early years the colonists suffered severe hunger, poverty and continuous attacks by the native gauchos. Sanitary conditions were so primi-

well conceived. Instead of establishing a concentrated settlement, which would have strengthened the morale of the settlers and given them other advantages, the colonies were dispersed over the vast expanse of five provinces. In 1890, Baron de Hirsch founded the settlement of Moisesville in the province of Santa Fé; in 1891, Mauricio in the province of Buenos Aires; and in 1892, the colony Clara in Entre Rios. Even within a single colony the individual farms



GROUP OF JEWISH COLONISTS IN ARGENTINA (1905)

tive that the death rate among children reached enormous proportions. Most of the colonists had little agricultural experience; only few had come from the colonies in Southern Russia. The JCA officials, themselves unfamiliar with Argentine requirements, could be of little assistance to the pioneers. It was thus repeatedly necessary to change the system of settlement and administration.

The general colonization plan was not

were so far apart that the settlers felt lonely and deserted. These conditions not only undermined their national and cultural cohesion, but had an adverse economic effect. That this policy was not accidental, was recently confirmed by the official history of the JCA: "The Administrators of this work have always been preoccupied with facilitating the assimilation of the people settled in their colonies, with the object of their becoming good agricul-

turists and patriotic Argentínians, though conserving their religious faith. In order to attain these ends, contact with the native population was necessary. Due to this motive the founder of this work desired that the colonies should be spread over the country, although groups were formed, because these were indispensable to the greater efficiency of the administrative and agricultural expert services."

Another detrimental factor was the more than unfriendly attitude towards the colonists on the part of the local JCA officials. Mordecai Alperon wrote of the inspectors that "these officials carried out their instructions rigidly, like good bureaucrats, without regard for individual interest, thus imposing a severe military-like discipline on the settlers..." Some years later, Leon Chasanovitch dubbed this type of administration "philanthropic feudalism." The contract, which each colonist had to sign, rendered him entirely dependent on the JCA, which remained sole owner of the land, houses, cattle and all property on the farm until the colonist had paid off his debt in full. Thus throughout the years the colonist was no more than a tenant, and since the proceeds of his land were mortgaged for the annual payments, he had to deliver his entire harvest to JCA warehouses. The contract made it impossible for the colonists to obtain bank credits, and they were forced to borrow from moneylenders. Even to pay off his

debt to the JCA before the due date, the settler had to receive special permission.

This economic and legal dependence rendered the colonists incapable of providing for their growing children. Since the land was JCA property, they could not divide it or raise loans for the acquisition of additional land. The reluctance of the JCA to make provision for the growing generation further worsened the relations between the officials and the colonists. Young people, who would have preferred to remain on the land close to their families, were simply forced to drift to the cities. Chasanovitch has only one explanation for this situation in the Argentine colonies: "The assimilated Jews of Western Europe regarded the supposedly uncivilized Eastern Jews with distrust."

But despite all difficulties and setbacks the colonies struck root. The Jewish immigrants developed into experienced farmers who laid the foundation of Jewish agricultural life, and helped to build up the agrarian economy of the country generally.

## 2. THE SECOND PERIOD (SINCE 1904)

By 1904 immigration into South America had almost ceased, but the Russo-Japanese war, the Revolution of 1905 and the pogroms resulted in a new stream of emigration from Russia. During 1904-1906 the JCA assisted in the immigration of 25,000 persons into Argentina, though only part of the immigrants settled in the colo-



THE JEWISH COLONY BARÓN HIRSCH

nies. The second period was thus mainly one of consolidation and normalization of the economic life of the colonies, whose population by 1914 exceeded 25,000. The extent of land under cultivation rose from 64,500 hectares (1907) to 183,000 (1912).

While immigration ceased entirely during the First World War, both the economic and cultural standards in the colonies steadily improved. Owing to rising world prices of all agricultural products, and particularly of meat, the colonists prospered. Because of the high meat prices most of the colonists concentrated on cattle-raising, some even succumbing to the fever of speculation.

The crisis came in 1922; prices fell to such a low level that many of the colonists were ruined. This blow was particularly hard on the younger generation, which thus missed the opportunity of developing and consolidating its agrarian economy.

The JCA report for 1916 gives the following account of the population in that year in nine colonies: 2,609 families (19,249 souls) earned their livelihood exclusively from farming, while 1,041 families (5,218 souls) were candidates for colonization. In all there were 24,467 Jews in the colonies. About 75% of the 544,695 hectares of JCA's land-reserve were under cultivation. The situation did not change considerably over the next ten years. At the beginning of 1927, 2,902 families in the colonies were engaged in agricultural work. The total population was 33,124 (5,832 families).

During this transition period the colonists began to organize independently of the JCA. At their first convention in Buenos Aires in 1916 they voiced sharp criticism of the entire system of JCA administration. At their second convention in 1925 they formed The Jewish Agrarian Federation, with the aim of organizing agricultural co-operatives, establishing a colonization fund to help keep the younger generation on the land, and of generally raising the economic, moral and social standards of the agricultural worker.

At the second convention the most bitter criticism was directed against the JCA decision not to lease to the Jewish colonists its reserve areas of land adjoining the colonies. The convention asserted that these areas were leased to non-Jews, while the sons of the colonists and new immigrants were refused land. Simultaneously it was demanded that, in addition to JCA officials, representatives of the colonists should take part in the administration. The JCA, however, ignored all these resolutions. After 1929 the Federation began to lose its militant character and functioned purely as a co-operative center under the name *Fraternidad Agraria* (Agrarian Fraternity). Since then they have published their own magazine in both Yiddish and Spanish, *Kolonist Kooperator* (*El Colono Cooperador*).

It was during the years of prosperity after World War I that the co-operatives began to play an important part in the economic development of the colonies. Apart from the co-operatives, which did the purchasing and selling for the colonies, a considerable turnover was registered by savings banks and mutual credit societies. Because of its sound growth, the Jewish co-operative movement was able to contribute considerably to the development of the Argentine co-operative movement in general. In 1947 the societies affiliated with the *Fraternidad Agraria* consisted of 12 agricultural and 11 dairy co-operatives. Their balance sheet, on August 31, 1947, showed assets of \$495,836, and liabilities totalling \$489,485.

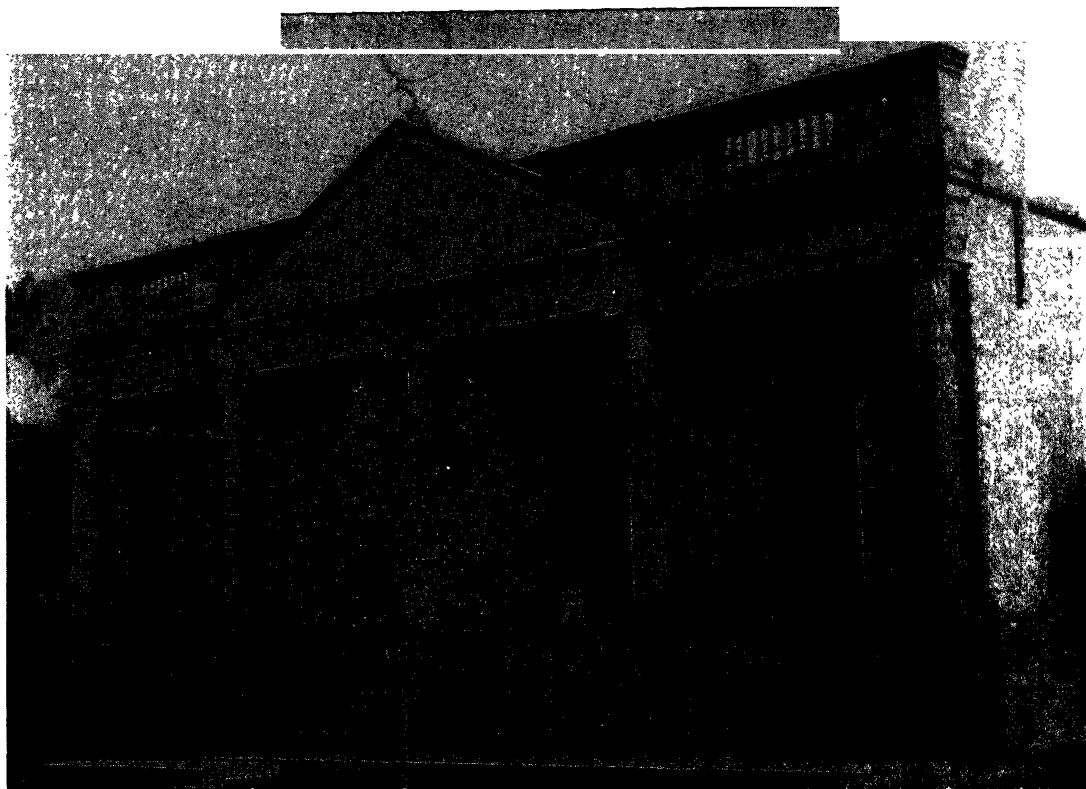
In 1940, the total area of land owned by the JCA comprised 617,468 hectares, of which Jewish colonists cultivated 413,059. Among the colonists 1,717 owned their land and 1,737 were still under contract. In all, 3,946 families (27,448 persons) lived on 3,454 homesteads. In addition, the JCA owned 193,377 hectares of reserve lands, which were leased to cattle breeders. About 250,000 hectares were tilled annually: 23% wheat, 12% linseed, 19% maize, and about 20% oats and barley, respectively.



HEADQUARTERS OF AN AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVE IN MOISESVILLE



PARK PLACE, MOISESVILLE



*Courtesy Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO), New York*

THE BARON HIRSCH PUBLIC LIBRARY IN MOISESVILLE

At the end of 1940, it was estimated that the total value of the inventories and installations of all JCA colonies amounted to \$6,250,000, or an average of \$1,800 per colonist. The following table shows the gross income in dollars during the years 1938-1940:

people, who appear to be the best element for the future of Jewish colonization in Argentina, are generally not granted the loans which they need in the critical period. In June 1947, there were 17 JCA colonies, of which 10 were in the province of Entre-Rios.

Source	1938	1939	1940*
Harvest.....	2,187,563	2,263,347	1,346,114
Milk Industry.....	244,556	273,687	297,552
Sales of cattle.....	178,912	223,764	232,363
Sales of eggs and poultry.....	284,715	289,564	275,208
Sales of alfalfa and sundries.....	257,906	272,575	198,423
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>3,153,652</b>	<b>3,322,937</b>	<b>2,349,660</b>
Average per colonist.....	889	969	608

\*Decrease due to the poor Entre Rios harvest.

During 1933-46, 398 families, recruited in Europe, were settled by the JCA. It is noteworthy that during 1920-1940, 841 sons of colonists were installed, of whom 524 were placed on land transferred from other colonists. Unfortunately, these young

In 1946, the 3,361 colonists in Argentina occupied an area of 407,812 hectares, of which 268,346 had been transferred to 1,932 landowner colonists. During the years 1942-1946, the net income in dollars was as follows:

Dairy products.....	10,710,769
Poultry and eggs.....	6,508,188
Sales of cattle.....	10,976,966
Alfalfa and sundries.....	1,688,402
Cereals and oil seeds.....	7,451,093
Various.....	3,574,567
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>40,909,985</b>

The net income in 1946 alone totalled almost \$12,279,000. The total value of the inventories of the colonists amounted to about \$33,946,000 at the end of the year, as shown below:

Cattle and poultry.....	17,717,219
Agricultural implements.....	5,818,760
Buildings.....	9,362,418
Orchards, forests, plantations....	1,047,615
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>33,946,012</b>

(The JCA also established several agricultural settlements in Brazil. These include the Philippson Colony in the State of Rio Grande do Sul near Santa Maria; Quatro Irmãos in the same state, founded in 1909, and Rezende, founded in 1936 in the State of Rio de Janeiro.)

Apart from the JCA colonies, Jewish colonists established a number of independent agricultural communities in Argentina. Their founders were mostly of the younger generation of colonists, those who refused to submit to the strict JCA regime and who wished to combine their ideal of agricultural work with a free Jewish communal life. At the beginning of this century they built the settlements of Médanos and Villa-Alba, and by the outbreak of World War II they had paid off all mortgages. Of the same type were the colony General Roca in the province of Rio Negro, and several others. In the settlements situated in the far North, in the Chaco province, the colonists have devoted themselves to pioneer work with great idealism and have

laid the firm foundation of a Jewish cultural life. The population of the independent settlements is about 2,000; their methods of production and crop stimulation are similar to those of the JCA colonies.

### 3. SUMMARY

After a period of more than fifty years of effort in Argentina, the goal of Baron de Hirsch to settle at least one million Jews on the land there is farther from achievement than ever. The reasons must be sought in the methods of the JCA administration as well as in the basic colonization plan itself. Although this colonization aimed to revolutionize the life of the Jewish people, it was conducted without its active participation. A popular cause, compressed entirely into the narrow forms of a bureaucratic charity institution, could not possibly flourish. Thus, compared with the ambitious scope of Baron de Hirsch's plans, the present-day results are small, indeed.

Notwithstanding its limitations, Argentine Jewish colonization has significant and positive achievements to its credit. The JCA has made it possible to rear a generation of sturdy farmers who continued the tradition of the first Jewish settlements in Southern Russia, and who were, in a sense, the forerunners of agrarian colonization in Palestine. In the history of Jewish productive endeavor, therefore, the Argentine project occupies an important place.

It must also be remembered that the establishment and development of the JCA colonies made possible a large Jewish immigration into the Argentine cities. The rise of a nationally active and socially progressive Jewish community of more than 350,000 is due in no small measure to the colonies, which comprise about 10% of the total number of Jews in the country.

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## IV. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Leon Shapiro

The Dominican Republic settlement project was initiated at the international conference on refugees at Evian, France, in July 1938. At this conference which met to consider the refugee problem created by the political developments in Central Europe, the Dominican Republic offered to admit 100,000 refugees, Jews as well as non-Jews. After a joint investigation by the Refugee Economic Corporation (founded in the U.S. in 1934), and the Advisory Committee on Political Refugees (created by the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt), certain areas in the Dominican Republic were recommended as suitable for settlement. The Dominican Republic Settlement Association (DORSA) was formed and Agrojoint provided an initial grant of \$200,000.

On January 30, 1940, a formal contract was signed between the Dominican Republic and the Dorsa, stipulating, among other things, full freedom, equality of opportunity and citizenship in the Dominican Republic for the settlers and their descendants. The prospective settlers were to be selected and brought from Europe gradually. But the war and, later, the United States' entry into the world conflict created extreme difficulties in the selection and transportation of settlers and hampered the whole project.

The first DORSA settlement was established in Sosua on land owned by President Rafael Trujillo. The total area of the Sosua

property consists of nearly 9,000 hectares and is distributed as follows: reclaimed land, 2,347 hectares; a suburban area, known as Batey, 117 hectares; land under reclamation, 2,841 hectares. The remainder consists of forest, swampy land, etc.

From its inception in May 1940 to June 1947, 705 Jewish settlers passed through Sosua. Of these, 332 persons left the Dominican Republic for other countries, or left the settlement for other locations. As of July 1947, the settlement comprised 373 persons distributed as follows: 166 persons grouped in 69 homestead units living as farmers, and 207 persons living in the suburban center of Batey as artisans, tradesmen, professional people, etc. The principal occupation of the farmers consists of cattle and poultry raising, and the cultivation of various crops (jucca, sweet potatoes, corn, carrots, citrus fruit, bananas, etc.).

While the homesteads are independent of each other, the marketing of their products is carried on by a number of co-operatives. There is in addition a co-operative loan society.

The Agrojoint provides the financial means for the support of the settlement. The general management of the colony is in the hands of DORSA, which works in close co-operation with the Homestead Council and the Economic Council representing the farmers and various industrial enterprises of Sosua, respectively.

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# JEWISH COLONIZATION IN PALESTINE

I. N. Steinberg

1. The Founders (1882-1914)
2. Progress of Collective Farming
3. The Last Decade (1937-1947)

## 1. THE FOUNDERS (1882-1914)

The colonization in Palestine constitutes the most significant and successful achievement of the Jewish people in the sphere of agriculture. The mistakes which hindered the development of the Russian and the Argentine experiments were fortunately avoided. The movement towards Palestine proceeded independently of regulation by governmental or philanthropic bureaucracy.

Zionism was a movement of the people; as such it sought to realize ideals deeply rooted in the national and social sentiments of the Jewish people, through the creative energies of the people itself. For large sections Palestine was the beloved, ancestral Land of Israel; for the working-class element in the Zionist ranks, the upbuilding of the Jewish homeland was linked up with the ideals of social liberation and universal progress.

During the first thirty years, Palestine colonization encountered great difficulties. It was only after World War I that large-scale settlement was initiated.

In the first stage (1882-1900), known as the period of "patriarchal colonization," Russian and Romanian Jews built up the first settlements, Petah-Tikva, Rishon-le-Zion, Zikhron Yaakov and Rosh Pina. These settlers were led by a group of Russian Jewish students, who were members of the *Bilu* movement, formed in 1881. (The name is composed of the initial letters of Isaiah II, 5: "Beth Yaakov L'khu

V'nelkhah—O House of Jacob, come ye and let us go"). Under the impact of the pogroms in Southern Russia, these students had resolved to emigrate to Palestine, where they then founded Rishon-le-Zion. The inexperience of the young colonists in their new surroundings, poverty, malaria and similar obstacles would have been fatal but for philanthropic aid, in 1883, by Baron Edmond de Rothschild. At the beginning of 1900, there were 21 Jewish settlements in a total area of about 60,000 acres. Three thousand of the 4,500 settlers were maintained by agriculture. Dependence on philanthropy, however, had a discouraging effect on both their morale and productivity.

The second stage (1900-1907) began when Baron de Rothschild entrusted the administration of the colonies to the JCA, which then proceeded to reorganize the administration and put the colonies on a more self-sustaining basis. The JCA also established a number of new settlements in Lower Galilee and introduced the growing of grain. Each colonist was apportioned up to 58 acres of land for extensive cultivation. But during this period, the results achieved were not of great significance; the hard-working colonists remained poor and their lives insecure. The European Jews were unable to reduce their living standard to the level of the primitive Arab peasant. Even the use of modern machinery failed to solve the Jewish settlers' problems, particularly since they had not yet learned to combine cattle raising with dairy and vegetable farming. As their children steadily drifted to the cities, the colonists were

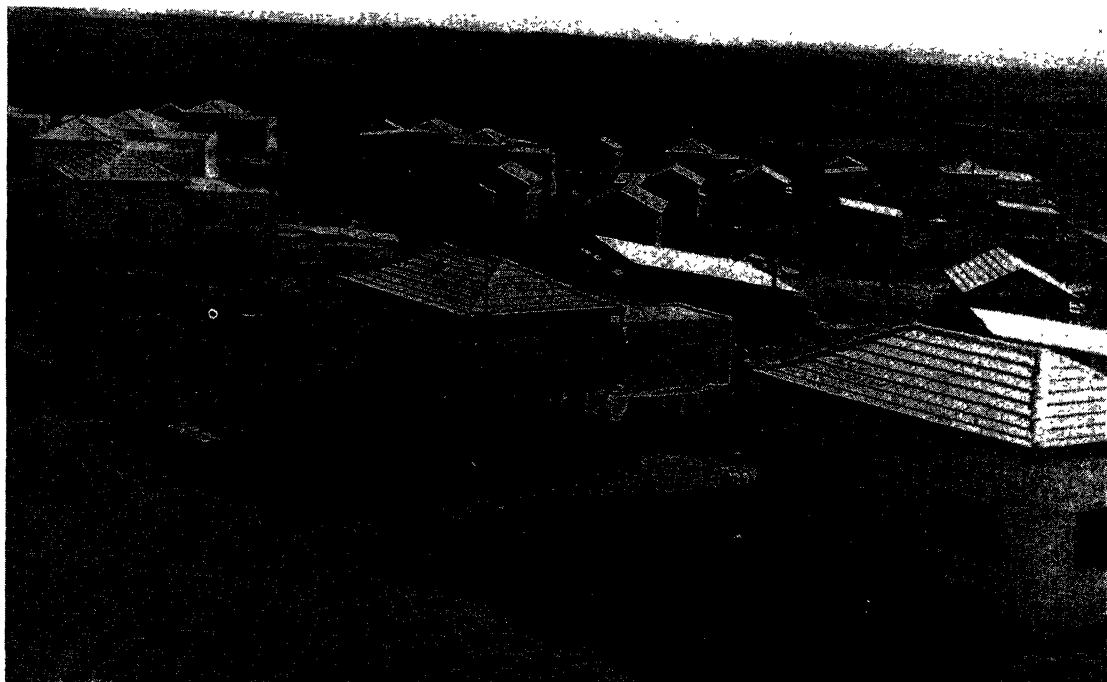


EIN HAROD, ONE OF THE LARGEST KVUTZOT IN THE VALLEY OF JEZREEL



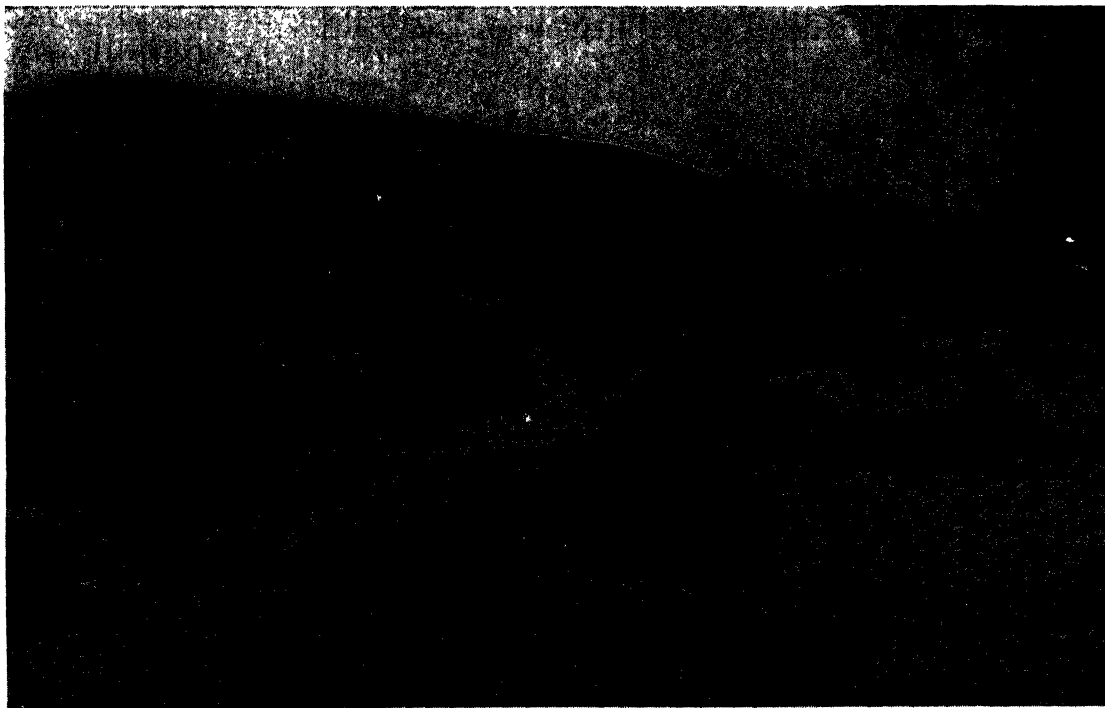
HAYMAKING IN THE FIELDS OF EIN HAROD IN THE VALLEY OF JEZREEL

*A. Kacyzna*



*Courtesy United Palestine Appeal*

**KFAR YEDIDYA, A MOSHAV IN THE VALLEY OF HEPHER**



**THE COLONY ROSH PINA IN UPPER GALILEE**

*A. Kacyzna*



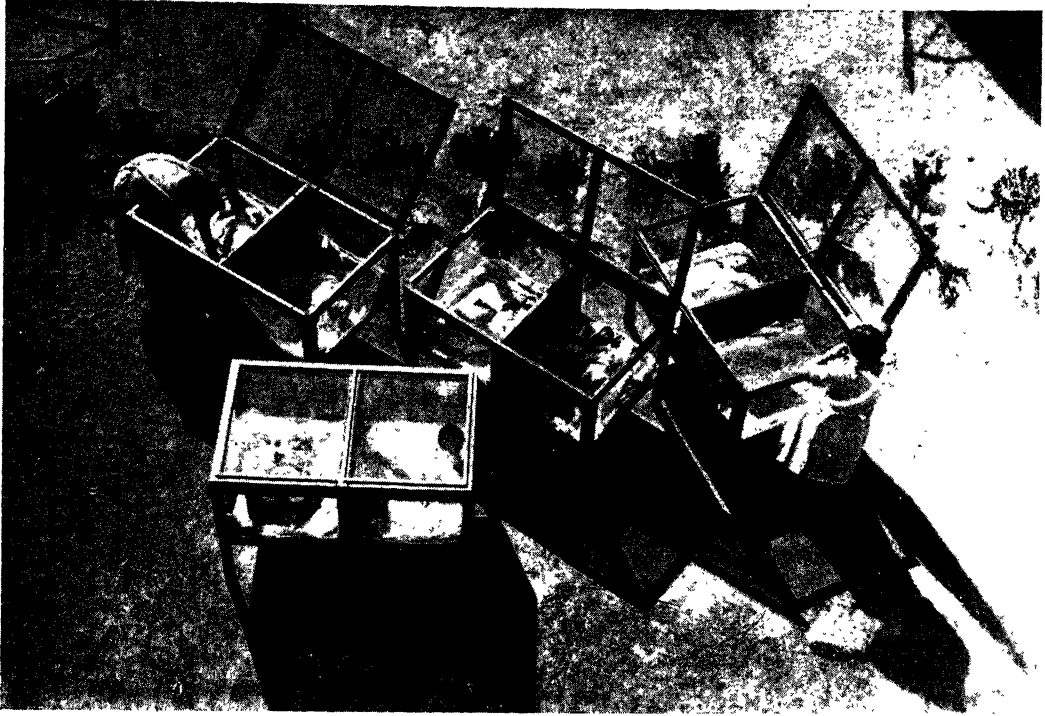
DEGANIYA A., A KVUTZAH IN THE JORDAN VALLEY

forced to employ cheap Arab labor. In 1907, for instance, more Arabs could be found working in the Jewish colonies of Judea than Jews. In that year the colonies, 27 in number, owned a total of 82,000 acres. Of their 7,000 inhabitants 4,500 made their living by agriculture. Dr. A. Ruppin has written of these settlers: "The old are weary and despondent; the young, educated as they are in French schools, seek a better life elsewhere. The old colonies have reached an impasse."

The year 1908 witnessed the beginning of the third phase of colonization, which continued until the outbreak of World War I. By that time a vital controversy within the Zionist movement—the issue of large-scale colonization versus small-scale settlements—had been resolved in favor of the latter. A special Palestine Office was created with Dr. Ruppin at its head. The

task of this Office (whose budget at that time was just under \$14,000 a year) was to attract Jewish capital to Palestine and young people from Eastern Europe as agricultural workers. Several farms and training centers (the most famous of which later became the settlement of Kinnereth, founded in 1908 by 30 pioneers) were established on land purchased by the Jewish National Fund.

A year later, the first kvutzhah (collective settlement) was founded by seven workers in Deganiya, and two years later, in accordance with plans formulated by Professor Franz Oppenheimer, the first co-operative workers' colony was established in Merhavia. Here the workers' wages were graded according to the productivity of each, so as to enhance the incentive to work. But the workers soon became dissatisfied with the principles underlying



*Courtesy United Palestine Appeal*

BABIES' CRIBS IN THE SUNSHINE IN THE COLONY NAANEH IN JUDEA

this system, and introduced collective work and equal pay for all. One of the founders of the colony, Joseph Bussl, wrote: "When we came to the country, we found the colonists truly inspired pioneers. But when we watched their lives more closely, we realized that they were working under the system of labor exploitation. We resolved to develop a way of life by which we could work without bosses and overseers, and dispense with outside hired labor. So we founded the kvutzah, which has various purposes: to free the land from private ownership; acquire new land; become an example of modern agriculture, and provide working opportunities for new immigrants. But first and foremost, the kvutzah is a serious attempt to create a life of economic equality and equal opportunity for both men and women."

It was not by chance that these new forms of colonization appeared in Palestine. Hundreds of well-educated, revolutionary-minded young people arrived from

Russia from 1907 onwards—the so-called Second Aliyah (wave of immigration). Some of them had taken part in the self-defense organizations; others had been trained for co-operative life in Palestine, and many of them were influenced by the ideas of Russian Social-Revolutionaries on agrarian reform. Their mode of life in Palestine, particularly in the kvutzah, entailed great hardships. But the workers in Kinnereth and Deganiya were moved by the passionate desire to pave the way for a Jewish life on the new foundations of manual labor, social justice and national independence.

By 1914, the Jewish working class in Palestine had already become a significant factor in the community. An area of about 100,000 acres contained 43 agricultural settlements; of the 12,000 settlers 7,500 earned their livelihood by farming. The following table illustrates the Palestinian colonization up to World War I:

TABLE 1

<i>Year</i>	<i>Land Area (in acres)</i>	<i>Number of Colonies</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Agricultural Population</i>
1882-1899 .....	60,000	21	4,500	3,000
1900-1907 .....	82,000	27	7,000	4,500
1908-1914 .....	100,000	43	12,000	7,500

At the end of the first 30-year period, the results appeared to be similar to those achieved after so many trials in Argentina and in Russia. And yet there was a fundamental difference. In Palestine, experience and manpower were accumulating for future expansion in colonization. Particularly important for this future were the many hundred pioneers of the Second Aliyah who had received their training in the first kvutzot. The tremendous development after World War I would have been impossible without their efforts.

## 2. PROGRESS OF COLLECTIVE FARMING

A new stage of colonization set in immediately after World War I. The Balfour Declaration now provided the colonization effort with a basis in international law. In addition, the Russian Revolution, with its political repercussions, strengthened the Jewish nationally-minded masses in their will to build a country of their own in Palestine. It was during this period that a new movement made its appearance among the Jewish youth of many countries—that of the halutzim (the “vanguard” of the pioneers). Young people were inspired by national and socialist ideals as well as ethical considerations.

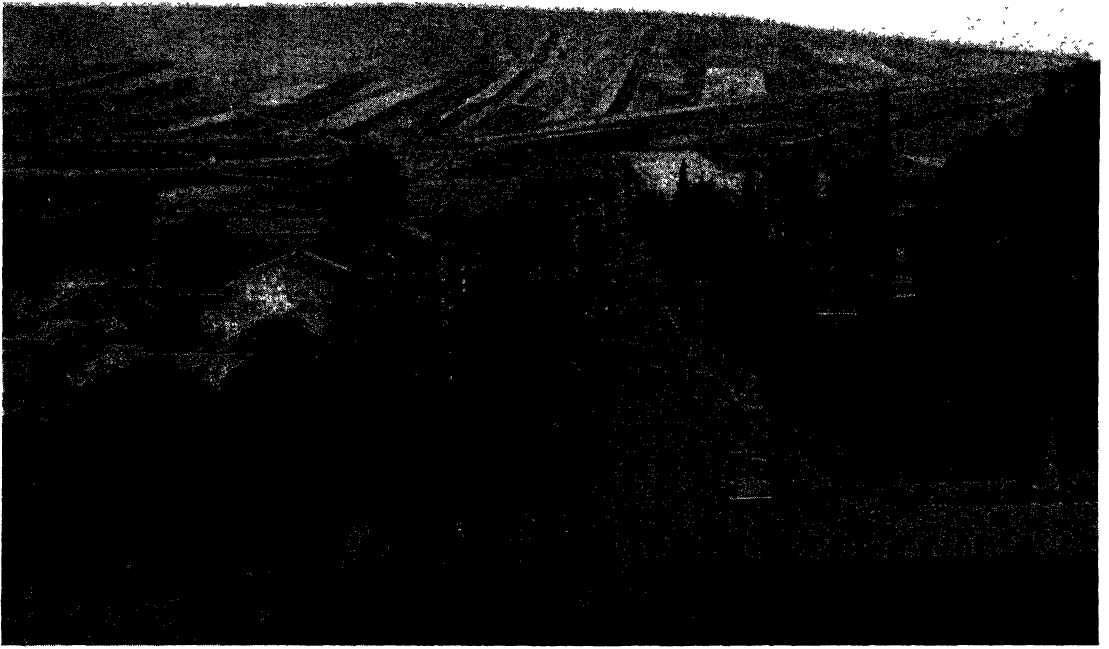
In spite of very great difficulties and dangers, halutzim poured into Palestine from Russia, Galicia, Romania, and other countries. They brought with them not only a readiness for sacrifice, but also experience in agricultural work. Their model of group colonization was the kvutzah. However, the small kvutzah, in which all the members were bound together by ties of intimate friendship, now gave way to the “large kvutzah” with its hundreds of members; this form of collective settlement

was called forth by the needs of the new mass immigration.

In 1921, the Zionist Organization began the colonization of a considerable stretch of land in the Emek Jezreel, where about 50 collective settlements were established. Over the years the type of Jewish social and spiritual community known as the kvutzah gradually evolved. The collective spirit permeated all spheres of the social and in part of the individual life in this form of settlement: property and revenue were collectively owned; work was undertaken and organized by all members equally; all received equal pay; and, finally, the daily needs of the members were also looked after collectively. Thus, for instance, the dining hall served as the social center of the kvutzah, and the education of the children was carried on collectively in the community’s “Children’s House” (Beth Yeladim). Underlying this collective form of life was the sense of joint responsibility for the upholding of the kvutzah’s national and social ideals.

It cannot be said that all the problems of the relationship of man to man, as for instance, the question of the borderline between collective compulsion and personal freedom were finally solved in the kvutzah. But the great merit of this new Jewish community consisted in the fact that it dealt with these questions on a practical basis and showed that thousands of worldly-minded young Jewish people were ready and able to live a collective life.

Some of the pioneers, who were unable to accept the radical principles of the kvutzot, founded another type of co-operative colony, the moshav ovdim (smallholders’ settlement). This type of settlement was based on the national ownership of land,



*Courtesy United Palestine Appeal*

MAIN STREET IN YAVNEEL, AN AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT NEAR TIBERIAS

personal labor on the part of all members (hired labor was admitted in exceptional circumstances only) and mutual aid, particularly in the form of co-operative purchasing and sale of products. But in all other respects every worker was independent. The idea behind this type of settlement found expression in the slogan: "The land is the people's, the produce—the worker's." The two leading moshvei ovdim—Nahalal and Kfar Yehezkel—are situated in the Emek Jezreel.

An intermediate type of communal settlement established later was named moshav shitufi. In 1946 nine colonies of the moshav shitufi type embraced 1800 souls, among them the Kfar Hittim with 225 inhabitants. Members of the moshav shitufi till the soil in common as in the kvutzah, but maintain separate households as in the moshav ovdim. Since the end of World War II this type of settlement ap-

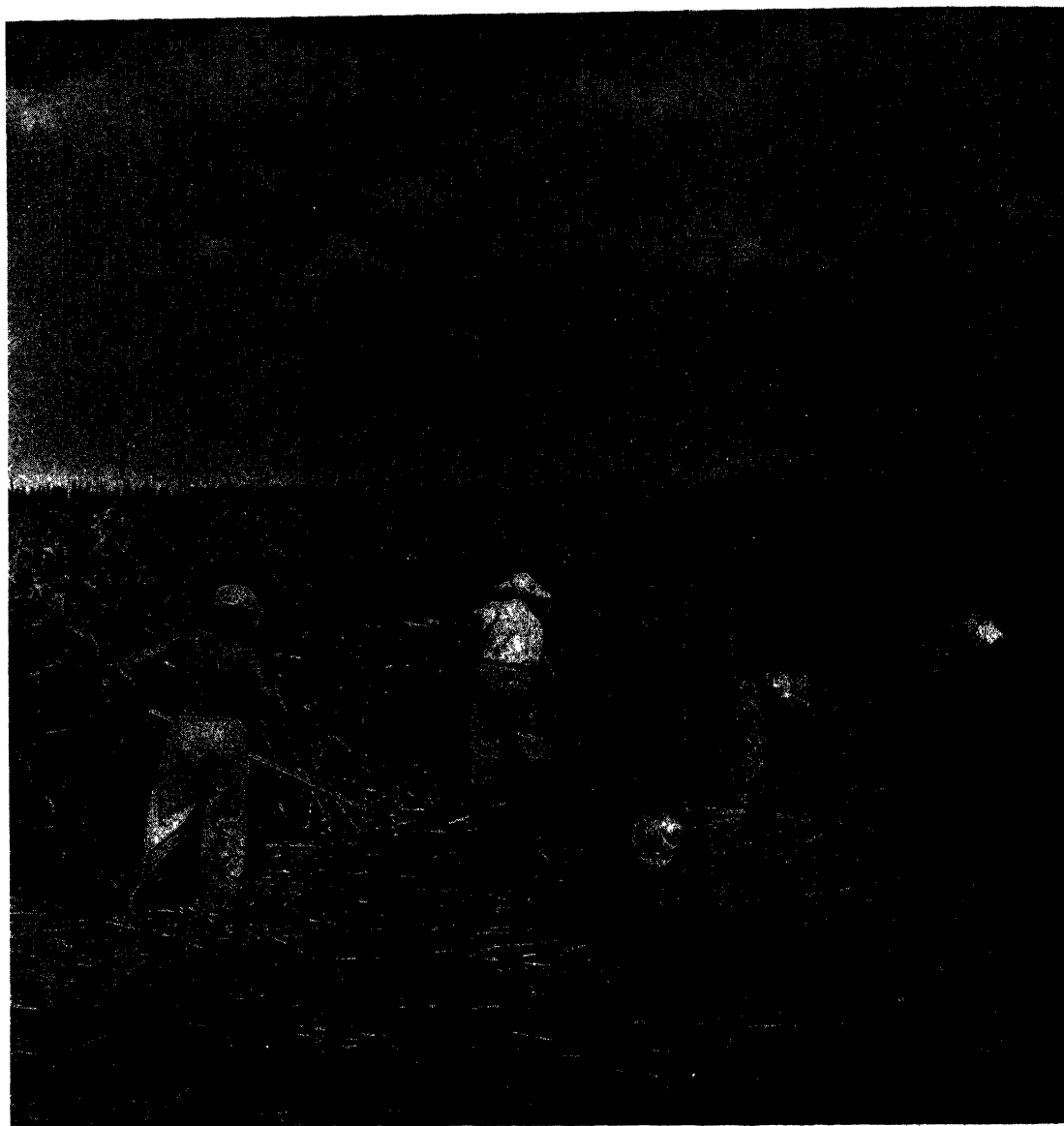
pears to be the one most favored by ex-servicemen.

The kvutzot and other communal settlements transformed a neglected land into a fertile area, and established their economy on a firm basis. Although in most cases deficits covered by the Zionist organization were the rule, in recent years there has been a marked improvement. Agriculture has reached a high standard; great advances have been made, particularly in dairy and chicken farming and vegetable gardening.

The average kvutzah consists of about 300 souls; but there are also much larger kvutzot, comprising hundreds of families, the largest of which are Ein Harod with 1061 and Yagur with 1298 inhabitants.

Each settlement is an independent economic entity, although all participate in both co-operative purchasing and selling organizations (Hamashbir and Tnuva). There is a strong tendency among them to





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#### HARVESTING IN THE KIBBUTZ GIVAT HASHLOSHAH IN JUDEA

combine into broader co-operative units, termed Kibbutzim, which co-ordinate their activities on a country-wide basis. One of the three most important of these kibbutzim is the Hever Hakvutzot ve-Gordoniya which now comprises 39 small kvutzot with 9,000 members, who live according to the social teachings of A. D. Gordon. Of their members 5,000 are adults, 1,000 are younger people from Europe, and the remainder are children.

The Kibbutz Haartzi, founded in 1927 by the Hashomer Hatzair, includes in addition to the kvutzot, workshops and factories close to the cities. The economic and ideological unity among the members of this kibbutz, comprising about 14,000 persons, is complete. The communal principle is not so consistently carried through in the Kibbutz Hameuhad (1927), which is under the influence of the Labor Party (Mapai).<sup>1</sup> Here a certain degree of difference in out-

look among the affiliated kvutzot is tolerated. This kibbutz now comprises 55 settlements with 23,000 settlers. Other important kibbutzim are Hakibbutz Hadati (orthodox) and Kibbutz Hanoar Hatzioni (General Zionist Youth).

At the beginning of 1937 there were over 120 agricultural workers' settlements comprising 9,900 families (27,000 persons). Their total income from various branches of agriculture, from their own workshops and outside labor amounted to approximately \$5,000,000 in 1937.

From 1924 onward, several colonies were founded, based on private initiative. These private colonies (e.g. Herzliya and Magdiel), growing in number, concentrated primarily on the cultivation of citrus fruits. Between 1929 and 1935, the area of land thus utilized was tripled.

**TABLE 2**  
**PROGRESS OF AGRICULTURAL**  
**COLONIZATION IN PALESTINE**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Settlements</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Area (in dunams)*</i>
1899	22	5,000	300,000
1914	43	12,000	400,000
1922	73	15,000	600,000
1930	107	45,000	1,000,000
1933	135	52,000	1,260,000
1935	160	70,000	1,420,000

\*100 dunams are equal to 22 acres.

### 3. THE LAST DECADE (1937-1947)

The period 1937-1947 includes three important events in the history of Palestine: the Arab riots in the late 30's, the White Paper of 1939, which drastically restricted the purchase of land by Jews, and World War II. But Jewish colonization proceeded regardless of obstacles.

The Arab riots dealt Jewish agriculture a severe blow. Woods and orange groves were set on fire. The private purchase of land was almost paralyzed. Yet during those years the Jewish National Fund acquired 94,000 dunams, and established 53 new colonies. The White Paper excluded 95% of Palestine from Jewish colonization and this led to skyrocketing of the price of land

available. The advent of the war with the accompanying rupture of transport and export facilities, brought on a crisis in the citrus fruit industry. Thirty-three thousand dunams of citrus plantations were left uncultivated; while the remainder produced only up to a third of capacity, a yield reserved for home consumption. But the colonization process continued to break new ground: in the hills of Judea, Upper Galilee, Samaria and the South. Between 1939 and 1946, 82 colonies were founded. These new settlements maintained a population of 8,500 in a total area of 180,000 dunams.

Heroic efforts were made to colonize the Negev (Southern Palestine). In 1943, an observation post, Gvulot, was established in the southwest of Beersheba, in order to study the climatic and physical conditions of the region, and two others were soon added. In October 1946, on the morning following Yom Kippur, 12 new settlements were established in this region, and two more were founded in November 1947. Thus, between 1936 and 1946, Jewish Palestine was enriched by 105 agricultural units.

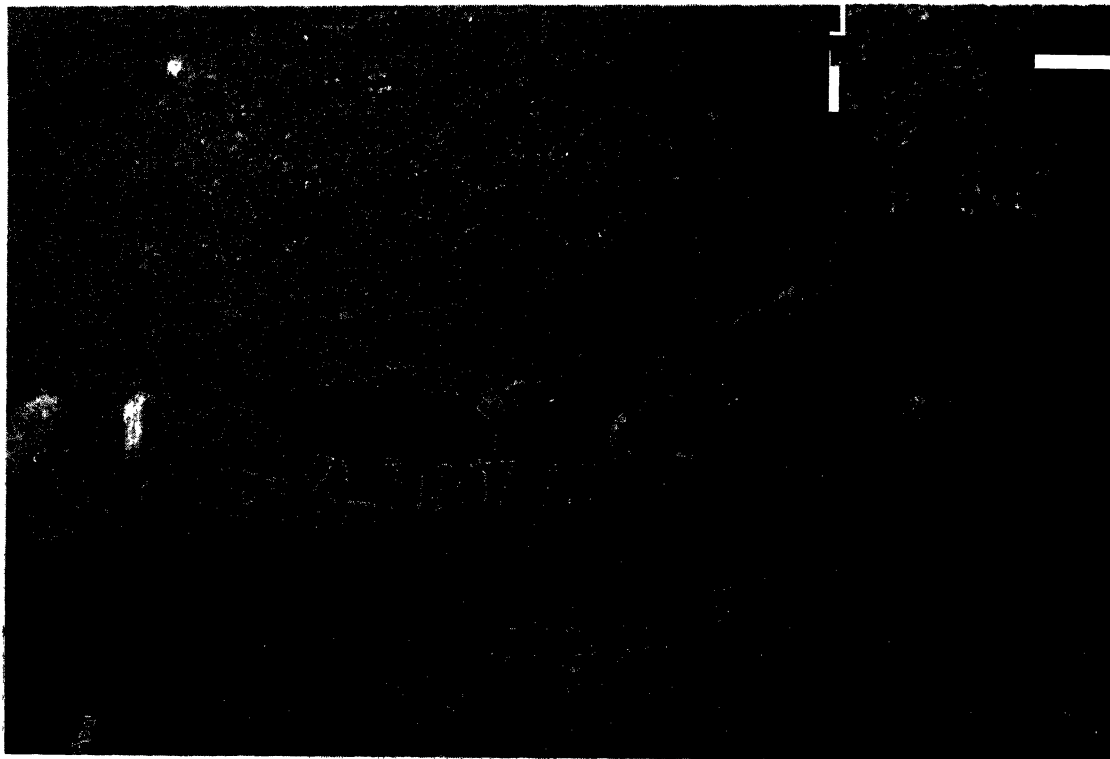
Of special interest are the 23 settlements in the Lake Huleh area, north of Rosh Pina. The reclamation of this swampy land, which is still not fully drained, demanded great sacrifices on the part of the colonists. No less than 15 kvutzot, four moshavim and four non-communal villages were founded there. The special significance of the Huleh region "lies in the fact that it contains the main source of water for future country-wide irrigation progress" (Report of the Jewish Agency to the 22nd Zionist Congress at Basle, 1946).

**TABLE 3**  
**INCREASE OF JEWISH-OWNED LAND**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Area in dunams</i>	<i>Area Owned by J.N.F.</i>	<i>Percent of J.N.F. Land</i>
1914	418,000	16,400	4
1932	1,007,500	296,900	29
1945	1,590,000	805,000	51
1947	1,810,000	875,000	48

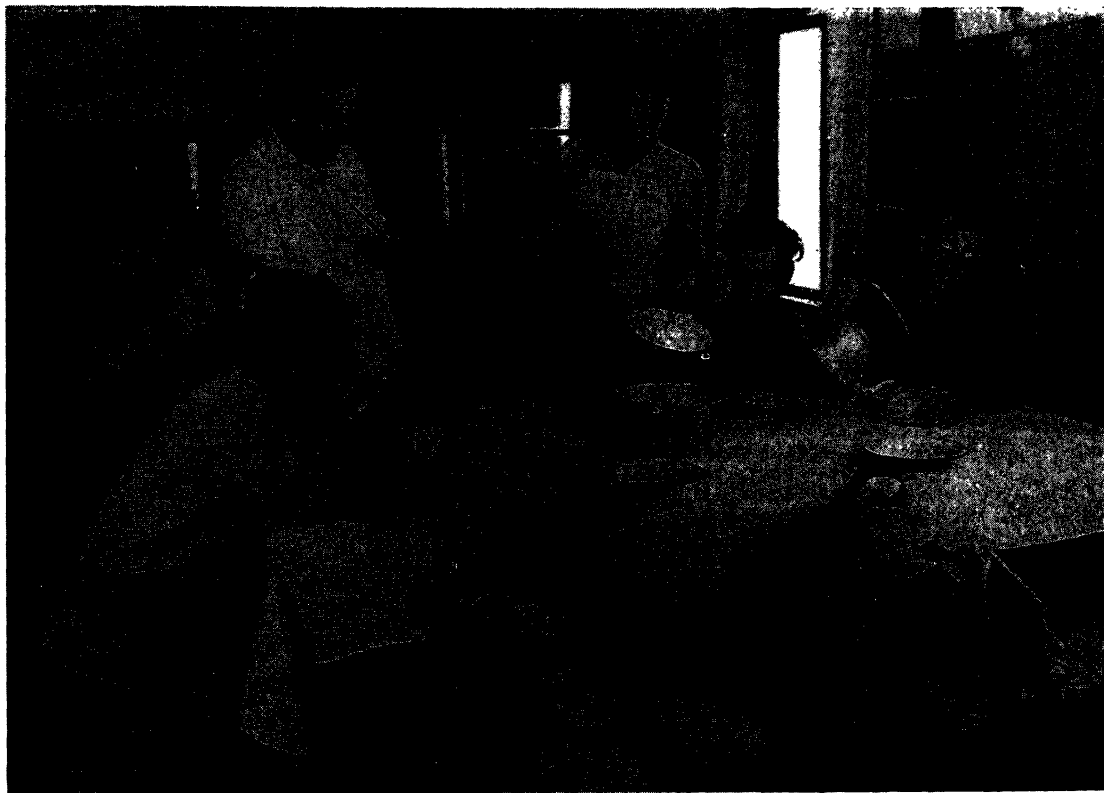


*Courtesy United Palestine Appeal*  
BETH ALPHA, A COLLECTIVE SETTLEMENT IN THE VALLEY OF JEZREEL

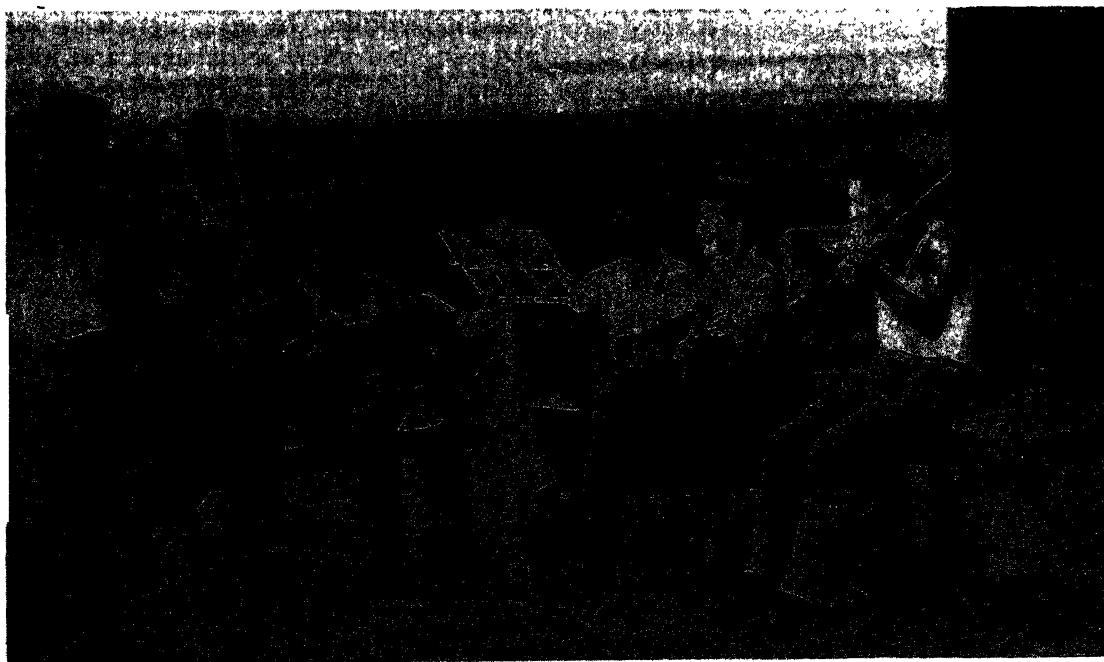


PLOUGHING IN TEL YOSEF, A KIBBUTZ IN THE VALLEY OF JEZREEL

*A. Kacyzna*



*Courtesy Labor Palestine Information Bureau*  
MEMBERS OF A KVUTZAH AT LUNCH



*Courtesy United Palestine Appeal*  
JEWISH SETTLERS FROM GERMANY  
An hour of relaxation

**TABLE 4**  
**PROGRESS OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS' SETTLEMENTS**

Year	KVUTZOT			MOSHAVIM		
	Number of Settlements	Area in Dunams	Population	Number of Villages	Area in Dunams	Population
1920	13	14,800	450	6	7,200	200
1930	24	76,000	2,500	17	64,500	3,100
1940	79	254,800	22,100	53	164,000	14,000
1947	126	430,000	38,500	69	220,000	16,000

The agricultural labor settlements produce 60% of all cereals, milk, eggs and vegetables yielded by Jewish farms, and 80% of the total fodder. The average annual milk yield per cow exceeds 4,000 litres, as compared, for instance, with 3,600 in the Netherlands, the highest in Europe. Taking the yield per cow in Palestine's workers' settlements as 100, the relative figures for some other countries are: 90 for the Netherlands, 89 for Denmark, 84 for Switzerland, 73 for England and 57 for Canada. The following table gives a detailed picture of the produce of the labor agricultural settlements, marketed by Tnuva.

**TABLE 5**

Item	1935-36	1945-46
Milk and milk products.....	18,075,000 <sup>1</sup>	38,800,000 <sup>1</sup>
Eggs.....	11,260,000	33,250,000
Poultry.....	231 <sup>2</sup>	1,130 <sup>2</sup>
Potatoes.....	862	7,200
Vegetables.....	4,300	12,000
Bananas.....	528	3,300
Grapes.....	1,070	3,700
Fresh water fish.....	—	1,200
Sea fish.....	—	200

1, Litres. 2. Poultry etc. in Tons.

A most significant development during the war years was the emergence of additional economic pursuits. "Villages were established along the coast that combined agriculture and fishing. . . For many years some settlements tried to combine manufacturing with farming. . . (they) set up workshops to make the settlements' clothing and shoes. Later they established their

own repair shops for farm implements. . . In time, these various shops began to work for customers outside the settlements, and finally the settlements began to develop industrial plants." The war intensified this development: the canning industry was expanded, and the output—jam, juices, vegetables—was purchased by the British army. The quoted report further says: "Wood work and mechanical work also expanded. . . The industrialization of the settlements may have far-reaching consequences. The farms have gained new sources of income, new jobs independent of seasonal fluctuations, and more varied training facilities." In 1944, there were 108 plants in the workers' settlements, and, altogether, they employed 1,287 workers.

This description of Jewish agricultural colonization in Palestine would be incomplete without an analysis of the social composition of the villages and settlements (see Table 6).

**TABLE 6**  
**OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS IN THE RURAL SETTLEMENTS, 1944 IN PERCENT**

Occupation	Villages	Moshavim	Kvutzot
Agriculture.....	26	71	53
Industry and handicraft.....	22	6	11
Trade.....	10	3	—
Others.....	42	20	36
Total.....	100	100	100

On the eve of World War II, Jewish agriculture in Palestine absorbed 19% of the total Jewish population in the country.

Owing to a number of adverse circumstances, however, this ratio has, in the aftermath of the war, fallen to 10.7%. The rural population is not entirely composed of farm laborers. There is a general trend toward decrease in the relative numbers of agricultural workers within the rural population (Table 7).

**TABLE 7**  
**JEWISH POPULATION IN THE**  
**RURAL SETTLEMENTS**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Agricultural Population</i>	<i>Percent of Agricultural Population</i>
1882	500	400	80
1900	5,200	3,400	65
1914	12,000	7,500	62
1931	41,300	24,000	60
1936	98,600	55,000	56
1939	138,000	70,000	51

To a certain extent the declining proportion of agricultural workers in the settlements can be explained by the crisis in the citrus industry. "With the resumption of full cultivation in the orange groves in the post-war period, the proportion of farm workers will rise" (Joshua Ziman).

Mention must be made of an additional development in the non-communal sector of Jewish agriculture in Palestine. A new type of middle-class settlement has lately arisen, called *kfarim shitufim* (co-operative

villages). Here the settler owns and works his own farm and may hire labor. Only buying activities and the marketing of produce are handled co-operatively.

At the end of 1945, there were 203 workers' settlements in Palestine: 112 *kvutzot*, 53 *moshavim* and 38 other co-operative units. There were also 15 "middle-class settlements" and 10 settlements consisting of ex-servicemen. Altogether these comprised over 65,000 persons. Apart from these, there were 46 villages on privately owned land, with individual ownership and hired labor (mainly concerned with citrus-culture), which had a population of almost 75,000. All these made a total of 274 settlements of all varieties.

According to the most recent reports, there are, to date, no less than 325 rural settlements, including all the villages established since the 1880's. Of these 230 are situated on the land of the Jewish National Fund.

There is no doubt that colonization in Palestine has attained a high standard, the highest in modern Jewish history. During the last decade, the Yishuv's development has been hampered by political complications, but the economic and human foundations of its agricultural colonies is basically sound.

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# TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

Abraham Golomb

1. Historical Roots
2. Pre-School Age
3. School System
4. Educational Goals and Achievements

## 1. HISTORICAL ROOTS

The history of Jewish traditional education comprises two main periods: the pre-Pharisaic, and the one inaugurated by the Pharisees (second century B.C.E.). In the earlier, instruction was confined to the home and was chiefly an aspect of family life; it was only with the emergence of the Pharisees that organized public education was consciously conceived as a means of fostering and sustaining national existence.

No direct evidence is available of the presence, in the earlier period, of professional teachers of reading or writing, although actually the knowledge of these arts was widespread. That is not to say that even then there were no public institutions for preserving and moulding the national tradition. The Prophets were surrounded by their disciples, the so-called "sons of the Prophets," and the calling of priest-scribe generally passed from father to son. An important educational role, moreover, was played by various national pastimes as well as by the observance of religious festivals and pilgrimages to Jerusalem on the occasions of Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. In narrating Israel's history to the young, the older members of the community zealously stressed its religious, ethical and national aspects. Youthful interest was particularly stimulated by recounting the legends and tales of the heroic deeds of bygone days. These nar-

ratives were gradually recorded in books, portions of which were later canonized in the Bible. A great many chapters of the Bible attest to this didactic approach to history. A further educational influence must have been exercised by the poets and singers, whose custom it was to recite and chant at public gatherings at the temples and "high places"; the names of several such poet-singers have been preserved in the Book of Psalms.

With the Babylonian Exile, public instruction gradually became a matter of national concern. Specific occasions were established for the reading of the Torah, and provision was later made for its translation (and interpretation) into Aramaic, the language then current among the Jews. After the restoration of a Jewish community in Palestine, there sprang up the profession of the scribes (*soferim*), who collected and recorded the national traditions, rewrote and edited the ancient books and distributed among the people those which accorded with the national concepts. Thus was the Torah compiled and hallowed.

The Pharisees, who appeared during the latter half of the period of the Second Temple, regarded the Torah and the preservation of the national tradition as the *sine qua non* of national survival. Education of the young and instruction in the Torah (Talmud Torah) became a primary communal interest, and traditional Jewish instruction took shape. In pursuing their educational ideals, the Pharisees thus fathered the conception of compulsory general education—about two thousand years

before it was commonly accepted in Europe.

Most schools for children were connected with the bet-ha-midrash to which adults, too, came for study and for prayer. The Talmud indicates that general education for the young—even when parents neglected to provide it—was instituted during the time of Joshua ben Gamala at the close of the period of the Second Temple. It was Joshua ben Gamala who “decreed that teachers be engaged in every district and in every town, and that the boys be brought to school at the age of six or seven” (Baba Batra, 21a). Both Philo of Alexandria and Flavius Josephus attest that by the time of the Second Temple universal obligatory instruction for boys was firmly established.

The elementary school (bet-sefer) taught the Pentateuch and, at a later period, elements of the Oral Law. Only a comparatively small number of pupils went on to higher studies. Spiritual life was concentrated in the academies where students dealt with problems involving the interpretation and explanation of the Law according to the needs and folkways of the period. Almost all Talmudic literature is a result of the discussions and disputations carried on at these academic sessions. The opinions of the recognized authorities, the Tannaim and Amoraim, were generally transmitted orally, frequently over a period of several generations, and eventually systematized and recorded.

The early Middle Ages did not produce any considerable innovations in Jewish education. The Torah, Talmud and commentaries were still the centers of intellectual attention. The study of the Prophets was rather neglected in the Talmudic, Gaonic and later periods, being treated as optional. Secular studies found no place at all in this educational program. The traditional educational system held great sway by reason of its very popular and democratic character. Elementary as well as higher studies were accessible to all. It was

the duty of every Jewish community to provide for the education of the young.

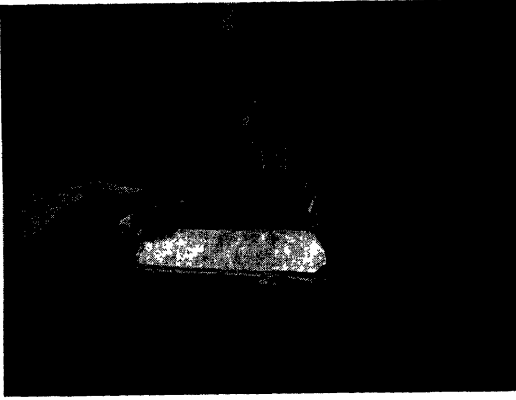
In some parts of the Diaspora, the medieval Jewish educational system was considerably modified by external influences. During the expansion of Arabic culture, the Jews living in Moslem countries developed a marked interest in secular studies. Grammar, mathematics, astronomy and other sciences were introduced into the curricula of Jewish schools in North Africa and Spain. Under the influence of Spanish Jewry (Sephardim) the Jews in Italy and Southern France likewise began to cultivate secular studies. At one time there was even consideration of a project to establish a Jewish university in Southern France. It was only after the thirteenth century that a strong reaction set in among Sephardic Jews against secular studies, particularly the study of philosophy. The Ashkenazic communities in Northern France, in Germany, and later in Poland (which in the sixteenth century became the most important Jewish spiritual center) traditionally emphasized the purely religious character of Jewish education.

## 2. PRE-SCHOOL AGE

By the term “traditional education” is meant the established manner of rearing and teaching the young, as part and parcel of the Jewish tradition. The educational ideal since the time of the Pharisees has been the study of the Torah: “The study of the Torah outweighs everything” (Peah I,7). This system affected the entire life of the child in the home, in the synagogue, as well as in his studies.

Children were introduced to Judaism even before reaching school age, which began at five or six. Often they were sent to the heder just to sit around under the teacher's eye, in order to imbibe some of the atmosphere of learning and Torah. The youngsters were required to say the benedictions and to wear the traditional fringes (the tsitsit). The “Thanksgiving” (Modeh Ani) had to be recited upon rising in the morning, a simplified version of the



*A. Kacyzna*

A YOUNG TALMUD STUDENT IN POLAND

Grace said after meals, and the "Hear, O Israel" prayer (Kriat Shema) recited upon going to bed. The education of the boys was of primary concern, but girls, too, were taught these traditional precepts.

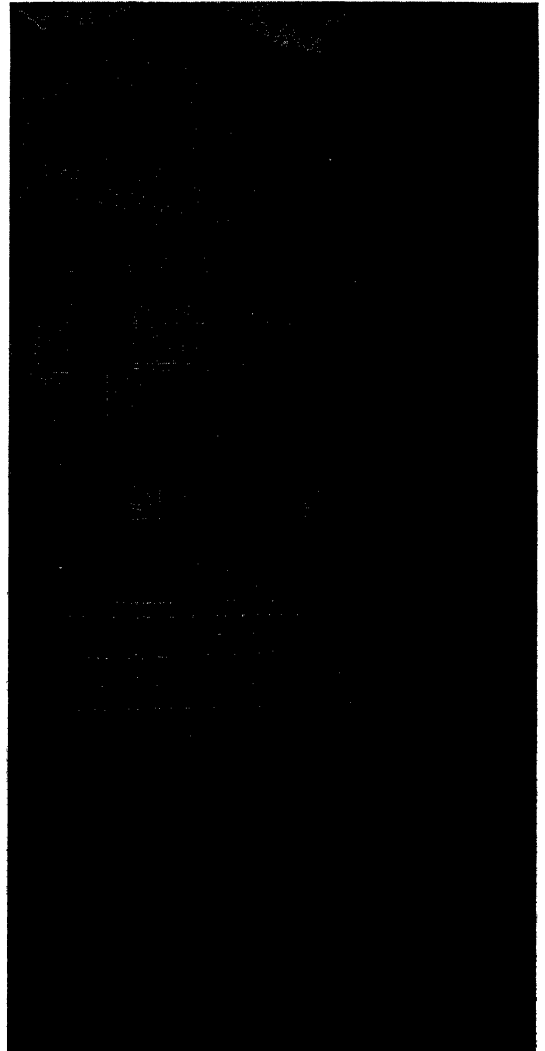
The child's early training in Judaism was additionally fostered by linking up the observance of the various holidays with distinctive children's customs: games with nuts on Passover; bows and arrows on Lag be-Omer; flags on Simhat Torah; money gifts and spinning tops (dreidlakh) on Hanukkah; noise-makers and gifts on Purim. The children's games, songs, masquerades, puzzles and tricks made up a specific and colorful folklore. Certain celebrations of a private nature also had a bearing on the education of the Jewish child. In the Jewish home no birthdays were observed except the Bar-Mitzvah (a boy's thirteenth birthday, which has a special religious significance). Other festive occasions were the child's entry into heder, initiation into the study of the Humash, and examination time.

### 3. SCHOOL SYSTEM

The Jewish educational system comprised the heder and the yeshivah, the former including the elementary heder for beginners, the Humash heder and the Talmud heder. The school year, both in the heder and yeshivah, was divided into summer and winter terms. The spring

month of Nisan which includes Passover, and six weeks of Elul-Tishri, the months of the autumn High Holidays, were vacation time for the students and time of enrollment of new pupils.

Children spent the entire day in heder with only a short mid-day intermission when they went home for a meal. However, not every moment of the day was spent in classwork. Frequently there were several disparate age groups under one teacher's care, and while one group worked with him, the others either played outdoors or studied by themselves. On the whole, a

*R. Vishniak*

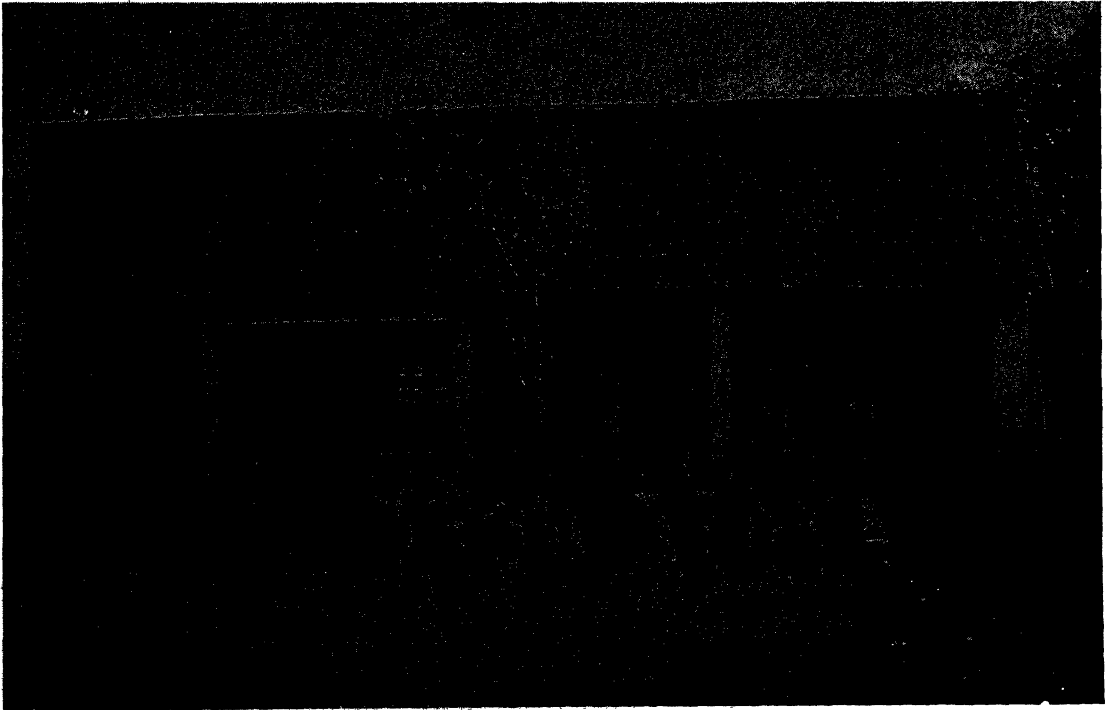
TALMUD TORAH IN BRATISLAVA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA

pupil probably spent as much time in the heder as a modern child does in school, including his homework. The subjects taught were: reading of Hebrew, the Pentateuch and other parts of the Bible. Part of the lunch hour was spent in perfecting the pupil's penmanship. The method was simple—the pupils copied texts or sentences written by the teacher. Some hadarim had special visiting instructors, who imparted an elementary knowledge of the language of the country.

The most trying school day was Thursday when the teacher tested his pupils on the work of the week. Sometimes the pupils had to attend heder for a short session even on the Sabbath. They would recite from the "Sayings of the Fathers" or the "Borki Nafshi" (Psalm CIV), and were then regaled with stories from the Talmud and Midrash. Sometimes the teacher accompanied his pupils home and quizzed them before their parents or even the rabbi. Grandmothers and mothers rewarded the youngsters with "Sabbath fruit." Punish-

ment depended on the temperament of the individual teacher. The larger hadarim boasted, in addition to the regular "melamed" or "rebbe," one or more assistants (behelfers) whose task it was, apart from assisting in tuition, to pick up and bring home the younger children and to keep an eye on them in the class room.

Parents had to pay for the education of their children in the hadarim, which were private undertakings. Only children of very poor people were exempt from payment, and in such cases the Talmud Torah Society paid their tuition. Originally the Society was a part of the community and supervised all the hadarim. Later, with the decline of the kehillah, the Talmud Torah Societies became independent bodies. The original name, "School of the Talmud Torah Society," was abbreviated simply to "Talmud Torah." However, parents made the greatest personal sacrifices and actually scrimped on food in order to pay school fees. In the United States, the Talmud Torah lost its original significance and



A TALMUD TORAH IN POLAND

came to mean simply a school for religious education (cf. *Jewish Education in the United States*).

Intermediate and higher schooling in the yeshivot was tuition-free. What is more, pupils received assistance to enable them to continue their studies. As a rule, this aid was given in the form of "eating days"—the student having his meals each day of the week in a different household, an arrangement which gave him seven hosts for the week.

From the pedagogical viewpoint, the heder differed from the yeshivah. In the heder stress was laid on those subjects which were essential to the practical life of a Jew among his people, that is, to his integration into the Jewish tradition. Instruction in the yeshivah pursued quite different methods. The substance of a whole text and not merely its components was studied in the yeshivah. The mental approach was the synthetic one. Even the language was an incidental acquisition. Didactically, the learning acquired in the yeshivah was of a far more precise character. Any knowledge gained by the masses who did not attend yeshivot came not so much from the heder as from the environment, from home and synagogue,—in short, not from study but from practical experience. The synthetic approach in the yeshivah, the quest for understanding, the stress on wisdom and not on memory, the passion for independent thinking, produced ideal educational results. From the yeshivot have come the majority of Jewish thinkers and creative personalities.

#### 4. EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The educational ideals of a people invariably reflect whatever it regards as its particular goal in life. Traditional Jewish learning was based on three principles: (a) preservation of a specific Jewish way of life which was, as it were, codified by national usage; (b) pursuit of learning as a fundamental basis of life itself and not merely as a preparation for life; (c) development of a common atmosphere of

integrated culture and custom, which shaped the personality of the Jew from early childhood.

The distinctive feature of Jewish learning lay in the fact that it was never "completed." Neither age nor social standing exempted a Jew from study. The very word "learning" signified not so much the process of studying in order to master some particular subject and complete one's education, as an effort to absorb the spirit of past generations, their problems, principles and modes of thinking.

The true scholar was not one who had absorbed a certain number of books or works; this in itself was not what qualified him to graduate. What was expected of him was maturity of mind, measured not in quantitative terms but in the degree to which he was capable of pursuing his studies by himself without guidance, his ability to interpret the sources he studied and to transmit his learning to others. The essence of Judaism was knowledge for its own sake, and the objective of scholarship was thought to be inherent in the scholar himself and in his abilities.

Every bet-midrash, every little synagogue had its group of scholars called "learners," "yeshivah-boys" or "yeshivah-men." These students formed a numerous social element of their own; in addition to its own local scholars, every community, no matter how small, supported one or more students from other communities. It also had its own special "study societies" or circles, consisting of its ordinary members. The most widespread of these societies were the "Mishnah Hevrah," "Ein Yaakov Hevrah," "Haye Adam Hevrah" and "Tehillim Hevrah," devoted to the study of the Mishnah, Aggadah, the traditional ways of life and to Psalm reading, respectively.

Materially, the career of a scholar could not appeal to the man of prosaic or practical stamp. Among Jews, those who devoted themselves to the study of the Torah came for the most part from the ranks of the poor. This fact found expression in the saying, "Watch over the sons of the poor,

for from them shall come learning" (Nedarim 81a). Here, again, the stress was laid on scholarship *per se* rather than as a means to an end. The degree to which learning was regarded as essential for Jewish survival is reflected in the special prayer introduced by the Geonim of Babylon in the current national tongue—Aramaic—and still included in the Sabbath service, "Y'kum Purkan" (May the redemption come).

In this solemn prayer the blessings of comfort and of children "who will preserve the word of the Law" are invoked on the "lords and rabbis of Palestine and Babylon, on the heads of the yeshivot and their pupils and the pupils of their pupils, and

on all who occupy themselves with the Torah."

This firmly buttressed educational system, together with the traditional customs of the Jewish people, has prevailed since the rise of the Pharisees. The elementary and higher school programs were outlined in the period of the Mishnah. From Talmudic sources it is clear that this program was intentionally conceived as a means of ensuring the survival of the Jewish people. According to these sources, schooling was not to be interrupted, even for the building of the Holy Temple; and "so long as the voice is the voice of Jacob," so long as children will study the Torah, the "hands of Esau" will never subjugate them.

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# THE YESHIVOT IN EASTERN EUROPE

Abraham Menes

1. The Renaissance of Torah Learning in Poland in the 16th Century
2. The Decline of the Torah Centers in Poland after 1648
3. The Gaon of Wilno (1720-1797)
4. The Volozhin Yeshivah
5. The Musar Yeshivot
6. Between the two World Wars

## 1. THE RENAISSANCE OF TORAH LEARNING IN POLAND IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

The Western European period in Jewish history came to an end toward the close of the Middle Ages. Beginning with the thirteenth century the center of Jewish life gradually shifted away from the West towards the East. The once flourishing Jewish communities in France, England and Western Germany succumbed one after another to a growing wave of blind hatred and fanaticism. At the end of the fifteenth century the same fate overtook the Jewish communities of the Iberian Peninsula. The year 1492, which marked the discovery of a new continent and the beginning of a new era of expansion for Western civilization, also witnessed the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, and thus, the extinction of the last great Jewish community in Western Europe. Sephardim as well as Ashkenazim were compelled to leave their centuries-old domiciles, and take up again the staff of the wanderer. Most of them found a haven in the Slavic countries in Eastern Europe, and in the then expanding Ottoman Empire. It was now principally on the young Jewish community in Poland that devolved the mission of continuing the thread of Jewish history.

In Poland, where most of the exiles from

the German lands found refuge, they also found greater opportunities for economic development than any Jewish community had known in Western Europe. Commerce, trade and almost all the professions were open to them. As a consequence, there grew up in Poland a large Jewish settlement which developed its unique forms of social and cultural life. By the middle of the sixteenth century Poland had become the spiritual center of the Jewish world. In no other Jewish settlement did the study of the Torah occupy so prominent a place, and nowhere else did the Jewish world present the spectacle of the realization of the Prophetic ideal—"All thy children shall be taught of the Lord."

The Torah had a universal-mystic significance for the Jew. According to Talmudic tradition the Torah is older than Creation; it is the Law and the meaning of the universe. "Were it not for the Torah, heaven and earth would not endure," says the Talmud. This mystic sense of maintaining the world through study inspired the pious student in Eastern Europe. His love for the Torah was further deepened by the idea so strongly emphasized in the Talmud that the "Torah is not in heaven" (an allusion to a phrase in Deut. XXX, 12). The Torah was given into man's possession and he is the sole authority to interpret it. All generations and all individual scholars can contribute their share to the Torah, can become partners in the process of the study and the growth of the Torah. This is the meaning of the Oral Torah, as a continuing, never-ending process of revelation, growing from generation to genera-

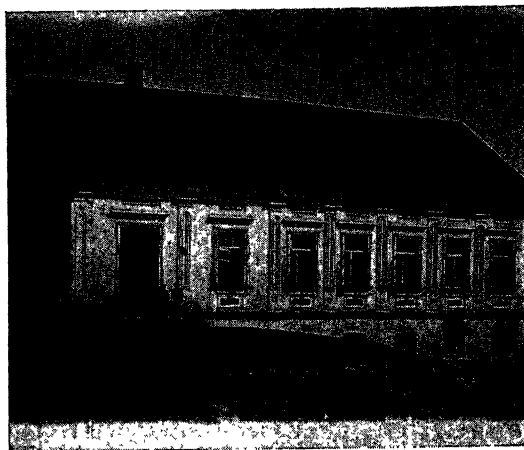
tion. Because of this exaltation of the Oral Torah, the Talmud became the foundation of Jewish education in Poland. At the age of eight or nine, the child was introduced to the study of the Gemara. The educational ideal was not merely to impart to the pupil a certain amount of information, but chiefly to equip him for finding his own way in the realm of Torah literature. To that end the study of the Gemara, which furnished the key to the other fields of Jewish religious literature, was of prime significance.

The study of the Talmud was given precedence even over the study of the Written Torah. In studying the Written Torah the student was confronted with the word of God directly, and he felt overwhelmed by the Divine Majesty. The Holy Writ admits of no doubts, no division of opinion or discussion. To the word of God there can be only one reply: "We will do and obey." In the Oral Torah the student met his fellow men, true enough, men of sublime attainment, but nonetheless men, human beings. There, he frequently found himself drawn into the disputations of the various Talmudic schools and authorities. The Talmud with its varying interpretations and legalistic analyses introduced the student into the innermost recesses of the Oral Torah and made him a participant in the process of its creation. The yeshivah student in Poland was interested not merely in the law, but above all in the dialectics of its evolution. Hence, the dialectic method known as *pilpul* flourished in the Talmudic academies in Poland. The student was not content with comprehending a given text but, through comparing it with other passages in the Talmud, sought to deduce certain general principles and new formulations. Every student aspired to original creativity; his chief ambition was to become, not a rabbi, but a scholar, and to study the Torah "for its own sake." It is worthy of note that Jacob Pollack (d. about 1530) and his disciple, Sholem Shakhna of Lublin, the founders of the

centers of Talmudic learning in Poland, wrote no books. The son of Sholem Shakhna says of his father: "Often the other students and myself would ask him to write a code, and his answer would be, 'If I should write a code, the people would regard me as the final authority. It is not my desire that they should rely on me.' For the same reason, my father added, his own teacher, Jacob Pollack, had not written any books." The heads of the Talmudic academies in Poland aspired to raise a generation of scholars courageous enough to rely on their own judgment and equipped to render decisions without having recourse to earlier Rabbinical authorities.

Similarly, Solomon Luria (about 1510-1573), one of the greatest Talmudic luminaries in Poland, sharply criticized those rabbis who unquestioningly relied on the earlier codifiers: "All that is found in books and manuscripts, even though deriving from early and eminent authorities, need not be considered as fixed law from which there should be no deviation." In the opinion of Luria, the codifiers made of the Torah a system closed and final, instead of the ever-fresh and living Torah it was meant to be.

The renaissance of Torah study in the sixteenth century was governed by the concept that the Talmud is the sole authoritative source of the Law. This renaissance received greater impetus from the invention and rapid spread of the art of printing. Talmudic and Rabbinic literature became accessible to ever wider circles. Hence, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was a rapid rise in the number of societies for the study of the Gemara, the Mishnah, and cognate literature. The members of these groups scrupulously observed set periods of daily study. Study of the Torah became well-nigh universal in the Jewish communities. The Torah was studied individually and in groups, at home and in the bet ha-midrash. The spread of printing stimulated as



Courtesy Isaac Rivkind

#### VOLOZHIN YESHIVAH

parallel development the appearance of a religious literature in the folk language, Yiddish. Thus, those segments of the population with only a limited knowledge of Hebrew were given access to the Torah literature. Early in the 17th century, the *Taytsh-Humesh*, a free paraphrase of the Pentateuch with the addition of Midrashic literature, enabled the Jewish woman to read every Sabbath the weekly portion of the Scriptures in Yiddish. Similarly, other books of a didactic and moralistic nature made their appearance in the folk tongue.

An intimate and vivid description of the extent of Torah study within the Jewish communities in Poland on the eve of the Chmielnicki massacres (1648), is given by Nathan Note Hanover in his chronicle, *Yeven Metsulah* (Deep Mire), Venice, 1653.

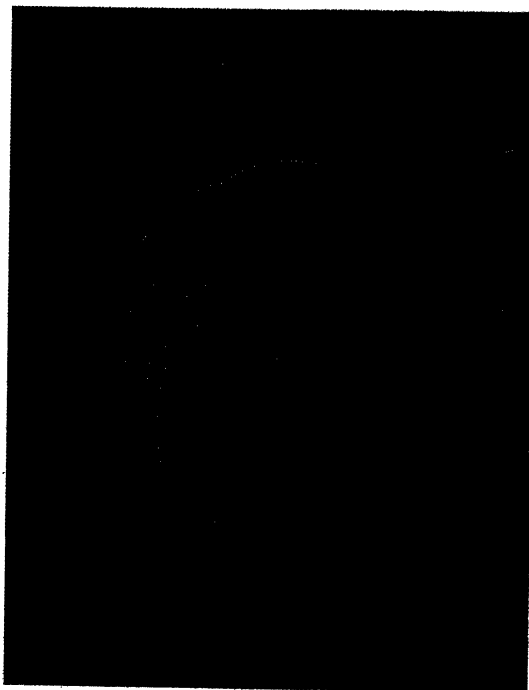
Nowhere in all the dispersions of Israel was the study of the Torah so widespread as in the Kingdom of Poland. For there every community maintained a yeshivah, and all were generous in their support of the academy's head . . . to enable him to occupy himself solely with the study of the Torah. . . The *bahurim* (young men) were given stipends by the communities to maintain them while attending the academy; each *bahur* also tutored two younger boys, and these, too, were supported by the community. . . . Frequently as many as thirty students might be supported by a com-

munity numbering no more than fifty households. In addition to the allotted communal stipend, the students were invited as guests to the tables of the community householders. There were more generous homes at which the younger boys would also eat at the family table. . . .

Throughout the Kingdom of Poland there was hardly a household where some member of the family was not diligent in the study of the Torah. The scholar might be the father of the family, the son, son-in-law, or a *bahur* who ate at the family table. And there were occasions, too, when all of those in the same house might be engaged in the study of the Torah. In this way three things came to pass which Rava enumerated in the Tractate Shabbat: 'The man who loves the scholar will have sons who are scholars; the man who pays honor to the scholar will have sons-in-law who are scholars; the man who stands in awe of scholars will himself be a scholar. . . .

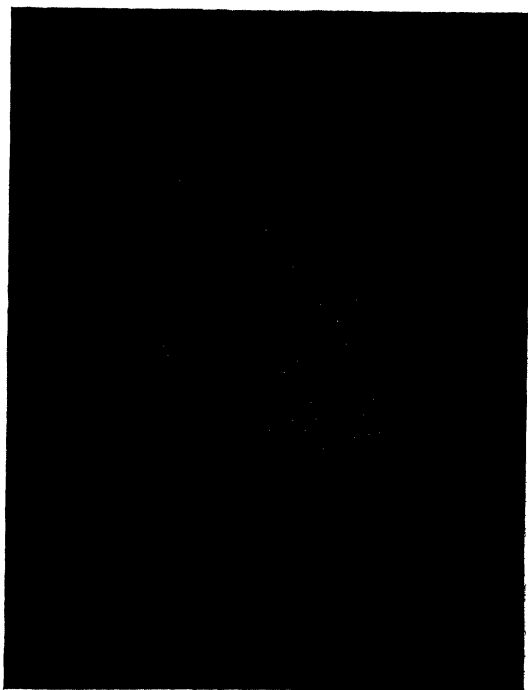
#### 2. THE DECLINE OF TORAH LEARNING IN POLAND AFTER 1648

After the Chmielnicki massacres the situation of the Jews in Poland gravely deteriorated, and this naturally had its repercus-

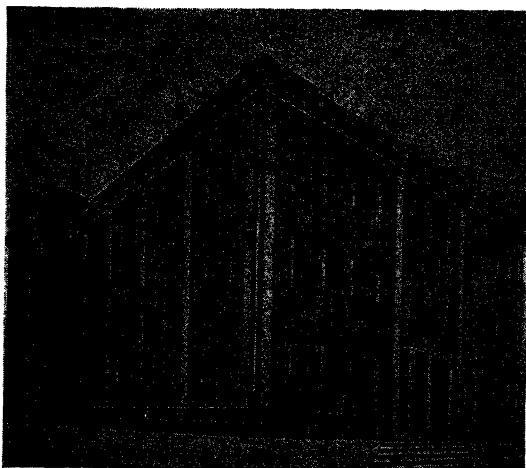


RABBI NAFTALI ZEVI YEHUDAH BERLIN (1817-1893), HEAD OF THE VOLOZHIN YESHIVAH

sions on the spiritual development of Polish Jewry. The study of the Torah was still widespread, the "tents of the Torah"—the houses of study—continued to be thronged with students, but the impoverished communities were no longer in a position to maintain large yeshivot. The splendor of the Torah lost some of its radiance. Moreover, a change of mood had come upon Polish Jewry; in the wake of the national tragedy, the full meaning of *galut* and all the implications of the Exile suddenly dawned upon the Jew. Messianic-mystic trends were now in the ascendancy. Talmudic rationalism could no longer satisfy the yearnings of the Jewish man. It was not the Torah, the word of God, but God himself who was the chief object of the meditations of the mystics. *Devekut*, attachment to God, according to the mystics, can be more easily attained through prayer and pious meditation than through the study of the Torah. The mystic categorically rejected the rationalistic dictum of the Talmud that the Torah "is not in heaven."



RABBI SHIMON SHKOP, HEAD OF THE TELSHE YESHIVAH, LATER OF THE GRODNO YESHIVAH



THE SLOBODKA YESHIVAH IN KOVNO, LITHUANIA

On the contrary, he constantly awaited a new revelation, and was deeply convinced that only he who merits the Divine Inspiration and the revelation of Elijah would be qualified to fathom the mysteries of the universe and of the Redemption.

These tendencies were particularly strong in the southern districts of Poland, the Ukraine. It was there that the popular mystic movement, Hasidism, struck its most responsive chords. The protest against the exalted position held by the study of the Talmud found forceful expression within Hasidic circles. Hasidism stressed the precedence of prayer, "the Pillar of the Divine Service," as opposed to "the Pillar of the Torah." Talmudic study was no longer as widespread; a great scholar of the period complained that in some communities the state of learning had sunk so low that even in the Houses of Study a complete set of the Talmud could not be found.

### 3. THE GAON OF WILNO (1720-1797)

Talmudic study was in a far better situation in Lithuania. From the time of the Gaon of Wilno (Elijah, the son of Shlomo Zalman), that province became the most important center for the study of the Torah. The Wilno Gaon, one of the outstanding Talmudic scholars of all times, was in his whole personality the ideal embodiment of "Torah for its own sake." He



steadfastly refused to accept the position of rabbi frequently offered to him by prominent Jewish communities, including his native Wilno, and all his life confined himself to "the four ells of the Torah." At a time when there was an increasing tendency to limit the study of the Torah to those parts bearing on practical life, the Gaon stressed the concept of an *integral Torah*. He pointed the way to a systematic study of the Bible, the Mishnah, the Gemara, the Codes, the Midrash, etc. The acquisition of such extensive knowledge demands unusual diligence, and the Gaon was wont to emphasize that "the Torah is acquired only through travail." Of particular significance is the re-establishment by the Gaon of the principle that the Torah "is not in heaven." A striking illustration of the Gaon's strong opposition to the mystical concept of revelation is given in the following account written by Hayim Volozhiner (1749-1821), the Gaon's disciple:

Heavenly messengers even offered to reveal to him [the Gaon] the profoundest secrets of the highest spheres . . . but he refused the offer. From his own holy lips I heard that . . . one of the heavenly envoys pleaded with him again and again; his reply was: "I do not desire to penetrate to the secrets of the Law of God through an intermediary. . . . Whatever can be acquired without my own toil and the exertion of my own mental faculties—that I gladly forego!"

A group of disciples and friends gathered around the Gaon, such men as Hayim Volozhiner, his brother Shlomo Zalman, Israel Shklover, and others. The Gaon's *kloyz* became a higher academy for the study of the Talmud; his influence, however, came to embrace much wider spheres of Jewish life.

"Following his advice and instruction many began to occupy themselves with the Law and the commandments, virtually neglecting their livelihoods . . . giving most of their time to the study of the Torah." (Introduction to the Gaon's Commentary to the *Shulhan Aruk*, written by his sons).

#### 4. THE VOLOZHIN YESHIVAH

The culmination of the Gaon's work was, in a sense, the establishment of the Yeshi-

vah in Volozhin, which remained for nearly a century the outstanding center of Jewish learning in the world. At that time Poland ceased to exist as a sovereign state and the western provinces of the Kingdom of Poland were incorporated into the Russian Empire. With this change of frontiers, the great bulk of East European Jewry came under the sway of Tsarist Russia. The Volozhin yeshivah was founded by Hayim Volozhiner, about 1802, soon after the death of the Gaon in 1797. In a letter written shortly after the opening of the Yeshivah, the founder of the Volozhin Academy says:

" . . . The yeshivot are no longer maintained in our land. Those who seek God and His Torah are scattered as sheep without a shepherd. . . . If we now keep silent concerning this matter, it may soon come to pass that we shall remain without leaders, and the doors of the Houses of Study will close, may Heaven forbid! Brethren, men of Israel, the time has come to repair the breach and to safeguard God's Torah with all our strength. Who will take it upon himself to instruct the students, and who will offer to support the Law with all that he possesses?"

The yeshivah made rapid strides. One of its earliest students records that when wayfaring merchants saw "scores of eminent scholars poring with unusual diligence day and night over their Gemaras, they were greatly amazed at the sight, the like of which they had hardly imagined, much less seen before."

Only students of considerable attainment in Talmudic studies were admitted to the yeshivah. The high requirements for admission, coupled with the scholarly eminence of the head of the academy, greatly enhanced the prestige of the Volozhin institution. In addition, Hayim Volozhiner abolished the old arrangement of "eating days," whereby the student had to seek his meals each day in a different household. Instead, in Volozhin the student was given a small weekly stipend, which enabled him to live independently in modest circum-

stances, thus further dignifying the study of the Torah and the life of the Torah students.

Nevertheless, the "way of the Torah" was a hard and difficult one. Most of the students had to content themselves with "bread and tea for breakfast and supper, bread and a warm meal at midday, and meat once a week, on the Sabbath. Their sleeping accommodations consisted of a straw mattress, a pillow, and a quilt. The entire day and half of the winter night were spent in study."

The yeshivah continued to grow. The number of students was constantly increasing, and the influence of the academy came to be felt in ever widening circles. In the second half of the nineteenth century, under the leadership of Naftali Zevi Yehudah Berlin, pre-eminent in both scholarship and organizing talent, the yeshivah reached its zenith, the number of students rising to more than three hundred.

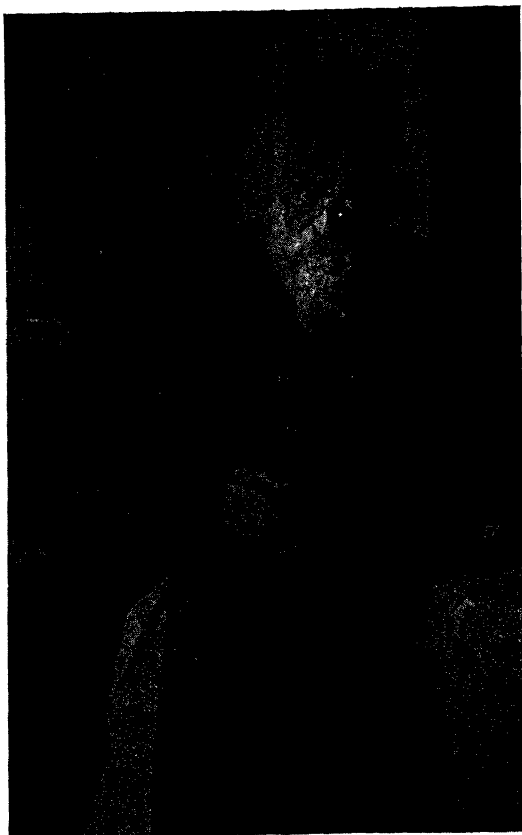
Division into classes was unknown in the yeshivah of Volozhin. All students studied in the same hall, pored over the same tractate of the Talmud, and attended the same lectures. The Talmud was studied in the traditional order of arrangement, beginning with the tractate of *Berakot* and ending with *Niddah*. Besides the tractate prescribed for the term, each student was free to select an additional tractate for study. The time for study was from nine in the morning to nine in the evening, with a lengthy recess for the midday meal. Some students stayed for special night sessions lasting till the morning hours, and others arrived at the yeshivah at dawn. Thus the academy was never empty of students and the voice of the Torah was never silenced, day or night. The students in Volozhin, as well as in the other yeshivot, studied "by themselves," without the aid of a teacher. The lectures of the *rosh yeshivah*, the head of the academy, lasted as a rule an hour or an hour-and-a-half, and were designed to introduce the students to the deeper meanings of the texts. Another practice was study in groups, usually in pairs, and ses-

sions of informal discussions of the Talmudic texts among older and younger students, frequently on the subject of the *rosh yeshivah's* lecture.

Volozhin attracted students from all parts of the world; it was a sort of spiritual reunion of exiles. The renowned Hebrew writer, M. J. Berdyczewski, who himself had been a student at Volozhin, described as follows the atmosphere of the yeshivah:

He who walks along the yeshivah square on a winter night will behold a wondrous sight. Lamps shed their light on the white snow. The voices of three hundred students studying with ardent devotion are heard from one end of the square to the other. Here a comely youth, a volume of the Talmud under his arm, hurries by; his soul thirsts for the Torah. Some students turn their steps homeward; weariness has overtaken them, yet it is with reluctance that they have interrupted their studies. It is here that Jewishness is revealed in all its majesty. It can truly be said: He who has not witnessed this sight has never witnessed beauty.

Besides Volozhin, the most important centers of Jewish learning in Russia during the nineteenth century were the yeshivot of Mir and Eishyshki. The yeshivah in Mir was in many respects similar to that of Volozhin, both in method of study and in the way the needs of the students were provided for. The yeshivah in Eishyshki, located in a small township of a few hundred Jewish families, had over one hundred students, mostly *prushim*, young married men who left their families for a time in order to prepare for the rabbinate or to extend their knowledge of the Torah. Unlike the yeshivot of Volozhin and Mir, the yeshivah of Eishyshki never sought to raise funds from other communities. The few hundred Jewish householders of the town, though men of moderate means, supported the yeshivah by themselves. This they did in such a dignified manner, with so much devotion to the Torah and its students, that their attitude aroused the admiration even of the sober and skeptical *Maskilim*, the followers of the "Enlightenment" movement. In Eishyshki, too, the students had



*Courtesy Isaac Rivkind*

RABBI HAYIM SOLOVEICHIK (1853-1920), RABBI  
AT BREST-LITOVSK, FORMERLY HEAD OF THE  
VOLOZHIN YESHIVAH

no "eating days"; their meals were brought to them at the yeshivah by the townspeople. "Occasionally, the townsfolk might themselves go hungry," says the Hebrew writer, J. L. Levinsky, "but the students always had their meals." In an appeal for the support of educational institutions issued by Israel Salanter and Isaac Elchanan Spector of Kovno (*Etz Peri*, Wilno, 1881), the town of Eishyshki is held up as a model of devotion to the Torah: . . . "Rich and poor alike, barring almost none, have taken upon themselves as a sacred obligation not to eat of their bread themselves, but first to give the best of their food to the students of the Torah who dwell in their midst; and that joyously; as with the first fruits in the days of the Temple, they bring their offerings to the House of Study."

Owing to the lack of funds, Volozhin, Mir, and Eishyshki could take care of only a small number of the Jewish youth eager to study. The greater part of the Torah students attended other yeshivot, where "eating days" were available to them. These yeshivot were in Wilno, Kovno, Minsk, Slutsk, Grodno, Bobruisk, Slonim, and a number of other cities and towns. Many of the youths also studied in the local Houses of Study or kloyzn, without the aid of a teacher. A description of such a kloyz in the small town of Kapulye, in the district of Minsk, is given in the memoirs of the Russian Jewish writer, A. J. Paperna:

"The kloyz in Kapulye was also a school for advanced Talmudic study where the local students could perfect their knowledge of the Talmud and Rabbinical writings. In addition to the local students, there were also some out-of-town students, *prushim* and single men. . . . As soon as a student would make his appearance in the kloyz, he would be welcomed and provided with "eating days." Thus he had food and books to his heart's desire, a royal lodging place—the kloyz itself. Bed and pillow he did not need. . . . The kloyz always resounded to the Talmud chant of a score of students from the town and the vicinity."

##### 5. THE MUSAR YESHIVOT

The exclusive concern of the yeshivah students was the study of the Torah. The program of the yeshivah included no other studies save Talmud and the Rabbinical literature. In this respect there was no substantial difference between the yeshivot of the sixteenth century in Poland and the yeshivot in Russia in the nineteenth century. During this period, however, the relationship of the Jew to the outside world changed radically. As a result of the economic developments during the nineteenth century the Jew was increasingly drawn into the stream of the surrounding cultural life. This trend found its most prominent expression in the Haskalah (Enlightenment) movement, which rallied to its banner a considerable number of the Jewish youth. The new movement, which summoned the

Jew to break away from spiritual isolation, penetrated into the very citadels of Jewish tradition—the yeshivot and the kloyzn. To these stirrings from within was added pressure from without. The Russian government made a concerted effort to “civilize” the Jewish population, and strongly supported the plans of the Maskilim to reform Jewish education, and particularly to introduce reforms into the Volozhin yeshivah. However, the head of the Volozhin yeshivah categorically refused to allow any modification in the program of studies, and in 1892 the largest center of Jewish learning in Russia was closed down by the government.

Several years later, the yeshivah reopened, but it never recovered its former grandeur. The leadership in the realm of Jewish learning passed on to the so-called *musar* yeshivot. The yeshivah Keneset Yisrael in Slobodka, near Kovno, now became the leading Torah center in Russia. The *musar* or “moralist” movement, initiated by Israel Salanter Lipkin (1810-1883), became the moral force which helped Jewish youth in the yeshivot to overcome the temptations of the Haskalah. The great achievement of this movement was in revealing to the young student the rich moral content of Judaism, and thus strengthening his faith in himself and in the mission of the Torah. The spiritual life of the yeshivah took on a new richness and breadth of interest. Beside the *rosh yeshivah*, the teacher of the Talmud, stood the *mashgiach*, the overseer, who was charged with the moral leadership and instruction of the student. Frequently, the *mashgiach* was in effect the spiritual leader of the yeshivah. Whereas the Haskalah called to the Jew—“know the world,” the *musar* movement proclaimed—“Know thyself.”

Israel Salanter Lipkin laid great stress on the ethical factor in religious life. The chief difficulty, he insisted, was not in the attainment of knowledge but in its application to the problems of daily living: “If only the actions of the greatest could measure up to the knowledge of the humblest!”



*Courtesy Isaac Rivkind*

RABBI RAPHAEL SHAPIRO, HEAD OF THE VOLOZHIN  
YESHIVAH

The problem was, therefore, to educate men to live according to the moral principles that they accept, to bring about a much closer correlation between the study of ethics and ethical conduct.

To bridge the gap between knowledge and action, it is necessary that knowledge become a deep and intensive experience. The reading of ethical treatises is not sufficient. The moralist literature must be studied in a state of rapture, “with lips aflame, in a mournful chant,” in order to stir the spirit to its innermost depths. Particular stress was laid on the chant in studying ethical works. The leaders of the moralist movement pointed to the example of music, which evokes in man both joy and sadness.

In the opinion of the moralists the study of ethics, if it is to have a lasting effect,

must be pursued regularly and at a set time. In the musar yeshivot it was customary to study ethics after sunset, before the evening prayer. The study of ethics, the colloquies on the subject, its serious pursuit became an organic part of yeshivah life. Ethics was the concern of each and all. Although each student concentrated on a different topic or kept repeating to himself a given ethical maxim, the general impression was one of a communal soul-searching and moral reckoning.

The first musar yeshivot were established in the eighties in Slobodka, Telshe, and other towns of Lithuania. Gradually the moralist movement grew in influence and numbers. In the nineties musar yeshivot were opened in Nowogrodek, Slutsk, Lomza, and other towns. On the eve of World War I, the movement had penetrated into most of the larger yeshivot in Lithuania and White Russia, including the famous yeshivah in Mir.

In the course of time several trends developed within the moralist movement. The extreme ascetic tendency was represented by Yoisef Yoisel Hurwitz, the founder of the yeshivah in Nowogrodek. He stressed the pioneering element in musar. One of the central ideas in musar is that "man must never remain stationary, but must continually strive to rise to a higher level." For "if man does not rise, he falls." The greatest sin is to "let things take their accustomed course; to follow in the steps of others; to live as the world lives." Yoisef Yoisel pressed this idea to its ultimate conclusion: "Never consider whether a thing *can* be done; consider only whether it *must* be done." He says further: "Where there is no road, a new road must be trodden."

More representative of the musar movement was the system followed in the yeshivah Keneset Yisrael of Slobodka. The founder and head of the yeshivah was Note Hirsh Finkel, affectionately called the "patriarch." The philosophy expounded in the yeshivah emphasized the worth and dignity of man, man as the crown of creation. The

Torah and the commandments were intended not to enslave man nor to burden him with a heavy yoke, but to ennoble him, to elevate him spiritually and morally. The benedictions, for example, the verses of praise that man recites in gratitude for the blessings of the world, are not meant as a tribute to God. On the contrary, these, too, are gifts of God to help man to comprehend the wonders of God's world. For God in His kindness recreates the universe anew each day, and thus each day man can experience the world afresh. Similarly, the laws of the Torah regulating the relationships between man and man have mainly a moral purpose: *to prevent man from committing evil, from becoming an evildoer.* This, according to the teachings of the Slobodka musar, is even more important than the practical purpose of the laws—to protect the victim against the evildoer. Man must walk in the ways of God, for this is the meaning of the verse: "In the likeness of God made He him."

The Lithuanian yeshivot also exerted considerable influence over the world of Hasidism, where the Talmud had in the course of time regained its central position in religious education. However, it was only towards the end of the nineteenth century that any larger yeshivot emerged in Hasidic communities. Of outstanding significance among these was the Lubavitcher yeshivah with its branches in various communities. In its curriculum the Lubavitcher yeshivah devoted special attention to the study of Hasidic literature.

## 6. BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

On the eve of World War I, the majority of Jewish children still received their education in traditional Jewish schools—the Talmud Torah, the heder and the yeshivah. A radical change in Jewish education took place after the war. Russia, Poland and the other Eastern European states introduced compulsory education, and all children of school age were required to attend the public schools or government-accredited schools. It was particularly sig-

nificant that during World War I and immediately after it, the various cultural and political groupings in Jewish life began to pay considerable attention to Jewish education. A number of secular schools—Yiddish and Hebrew—were established, and this had a profound influence on the traditional schools.

After the October Revolution in Russia in 1917, all religious educational institutions were closed, and whatever remained of traditional Jewish education was carried on privately. In Lithuania and Latvia the number of Jewish schools of the old type declined steadily. However, religious subjects came to occupy a greater place in the curricula of many modernized schools. Throughout the period between the two World Wars, Lithuania remained a center of Jewish traditional learning. The number of students in the yeshivot remained fairly large, particularly in those of Slobodka and Telshe.

Conditions in Poland were somewhat different. The Jewish schools, generally receiving no state support, were maintained by Jewish organizations and were compelled to request tuition fees. Although these were nominal; most families found them beyond their means and thus were forced to send their children to the public schools. Nevertheless, the majority of Jewish children in Poland received an adequate Jewish education—some of them in day schools, others in supplementary schools. A large number of children would attend a Jewish school for several years and later transfer to a public school.

Among the various Jewish schools in Poland the religious school occupied the place of primary importance. But this type of school underwent a radical transformation. The private heder was rapidly giving way to communal institutions under local or central administration. In 1929 the third national conference of the Agudat Yisrael established a special organization (Horev) for the care and maintenance of schools. Toward the end of the nineteen-thirties, the Horev schools which admitted only

boys had an enrollment of over 50,000. Of this number, some 18,000 attended day schools, where they received instruction in both secular and Jewish subjects. The rest attended the supplementary schools, where only Jewish subjects were taught.

The Bet Yaakov schools for girls represented an innovation in traditional Jewish education. On the initiative of Sara Scheiner (died 1936), the first Jewish traditional school for girls was opened in Cracow in 1917. The experiment proved highly successful, and two years later the Agudat Yisrael took over the school. The growth of the Bet Yaakov schools was rapid. In 1925 they had an enrollment of 6,585, and in 1939 some 40,000.

The educational aim of the Bet Yaakov schools was directed towards inculcating in Jewish girls the "realization that they are children of a people whose existence does not depend merely on the possession of a land of their own like other peoples. . . . The Jewish people holds the Torah as its only sacred ideal. . . . The Bet Yaakov schools aim to preserve the Torah among the Jewish women and to imbue them with its spirit."

The Bet Yaakov schools were largely supplementary schools where instruction was given only in Jewish subjects. The language of instruction was generally Yiddish. Like the other schools of the Agudat Yisrael, the Bet Yaakov schools had a positive attitude not only towards Hebrew, "the sacred and eternal tongue," but also toward Yiddish, "the language of our fathers and mothers." In 1937 the women's organization Benot Agudat Yisrael adopted a resolution making it mandatory upon the members "to speak Yiddish and use their Jewish names as a bulwark against assimilation."

Between the two World Wars the yeshivot in Poland showed great vigor. In 1937 their number reached over 200, with some 18,000 students. Especially worthy of note were the yeshivot in Mir, Lublin, Kamieniec, Kleck, Grodno, Bialystok, Radin, and others. The larger institutions were

mostly musar yeshivot. There was a marked expansion of the so-called Bet Yosef yeshivot, musar institutions of the Nowogrodek type. Shortly before World War II, there were some 60 Bet Yosef institutions in Poland, among them several large-sized yeshivot.

The yeshivot in Poland continued the traditions of the famous Torah institutions in Russia of pre-war days. Similarly, the curriculum and schedule of hours were practically the same in the larger yeshivot as in the pre-war yeshivot in Russia.

In addition to the schools of the Agudah, there were in Poland a substantial number of religious schools organized by the Mizrachi, the religious wing of the Zionist movement. In 1927, at the first educational conference of the Mizrachi, a resolution was adopted to create a special school organization under the symbolical name, Yavneh. Insofar as the language of instruction was concerned, the Yavneh schools did not follow a uniformly consistent policy. In some of the schools the language of instruction was Hebrew; in most it was Hebrew and Polish, and to some extent Yid-

dish. By the end of the 1930's Yavneh numbered approximately 250 school institutions, with some 20,000 pupils. There were also several Yavneh high schools and yeshivot. The best known were the Tahkemoni Institute and the Bet Shmuel Yeshivah in Warsaw.

Even during the tragic ghetto years Jewish cultural life in Poland was not discontinued. "When it became impossible to operate Jewish schools in the open, underground schools of various tendencies were carried on under the cloak of children's kitchens and children's homes" (From the report of E. Ringelblum, noted historian, who perished in Warsaw in 1944).

Of the thousands of yeshivah students only a very few managed to escape to safety. Some of the surviving students and heads of academies have in recent years established a number of Torah institutions in Europe, Palestine and America. In these new centers they are once again devotedly guarding the "Eternal Light" of the Torah and are carrying on the immortal traditions of Jewish history.

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# THE HEBREW SCHOOL MOVEMENT

L. Spizman

## INTRODUCTION

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## INTRODUCTION

The traditional Jewish school—heder and yeshivah—did not as a rule accord a special place to the study of Hebrew. True, the curriculum was almost exclusively devoted to religious texts in Hebrew or Aramaic, but they were studied for their content only. It was the Haskalah (Enlightenment) which awakened an interest in Hebrew as such. Its emphasis on *dikduk* (philology) was designed partly to challenge the traditional methods of reading and interpreting the Scriptures. In the hands of the *maskilim* (enlighteners) the "Sacred Tongue"—the language of the Bible—became a vehicle of propaganda and general enlightenment. But even the Haskalah associated no pronounced national aims with the cultivation of Hebrew. It was only with the rise of the national move-

ment in the last quarter of the nineteenth century that efforts were first exerted to transform the "Sacred Tongue" into a language of everyday life. Peretz Smolenskin and Eliezer ben Yehudah raised the cry for Israel's renaissance by way of a revival of its ancient idiom. Throughout the eighties and nineties there was a steadily growing interest in learning and speaking Hebrew, particularly among *Hovevei Zion* (Lovers of Zion) in Russia and Galicia. In Palestine in 1883, the first attempt was made to introduce Hebrew as the language of instruction in the Jerusalem boys' school of the Alliance Israélite Universelle.

## I. EDUCATION IN HEBREW BEFORE WORLD WAR I

The earliest endeavors to introduce modern Hebrew instruction outside Palestine were made in Galicia in the Baron de Hirsch schools (founded in 1895) where Hebrew was taught in addition to the general, state-approved curriculum. In 1897 the staffs of the Baron de Hirsch schools met in a joint conference. At that time 41 schools were in existence and nearly all of them had begun to teach Hebrew. The teachers were national-minded, and under their influence a powerful drive to revive Hebrew developed among Jewish youth.

The rise of Zionism in the years 1896-1897 lent further impetus to the Hebrew revival movement. *Safah Brurah* ("pure language," Zephaniah III, 9) societies were formed in various cities to spread the knowledge of Hebrew among schoolchildren, university students and adults. In Vienna the movement was led by Nathan Birnbaum; in Lemberg by Joshua Thon,



Mordecai Ehrenpreis and Yitzhak Leib Landau, who were young students at the time. Hebrew schools began to open; the first of these to be called "Safah Brurah" was founded in Lemberg (Lwow) under the auspices of the Zion Society. In 1898 no less than 23 branches of the Safah Brurah Society were in existence.

The legalization of these societies by the Austrian Government enabled them to intensify their activities. More schools were founded, the majority still bearing the name Safah Brurah, though other names soon began to make their appearance: in Kolomea the Hebrew school was named Safah Hayah (The Living Language), in Drohobycz, Ivriyah. In Stanislawow, the members of the Safah Brurah set themselves the task of maintaining a Hebrew school, a kindergarten and a teachers' seminary. In some cities, Czortkow among others, there were separate Hebrew schools for boys and girls.

The Zionist academic societies, such as Emunah (Faith) in Lemberg and Ha-Shahar (Dawn) in Cracow, played a particularly active role in the organization of the schools. The Hebrew writer, Shelomo Schiller, surnamed "Galicia's Ahad Haam," was placed at the head of an organization set up to supervise all Hebrew schools in Galicia and Bucovina (or Bukovina). From the outset the Sephardic pronunciation (havarah ha-sephardit) was introduced in all Hebrew schools in Galicia.

In Russia, too, the Hebrew education movement began at the close of the last century. In several cities "hadarim metukkanim" (modernized hadarim) were opened where studies such as the Hebrew language and Jewish history occupied a more prominent place. The Mefitzei Haskalah (Disseminators of Enlightenment) in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Riga soon began to support these reformed schools. Meanwhile, in Odessa, Ahad Haam and Simon Dubnow launched a campaign against the leadership of the Mefitzei Haskalah with the demand for a stronger national spirit in the Jewish schools, and a greater empha-

sis on Jewish studies, Hebrew in particular.

The formation of the World Zionist Organization led to increased interest in Hebrew cultural and educational efforts. The first Zionist Congress (Basle, 1897) resolved to set up a special body to stimulate the progress of Hebrew education. The second Zionist Congress (Basle, 1898) again voted to create an organization, with headquarters in Vienna, for the cultivation and more extensive use of Hebrew. However, neither of these resolutions was carried out at the time.

The fourth and fifth Zionist Congresses (London, 1900 and Basle, 1901) continued to devote their attention to cultural problems. The Mizrachi, the Orthodox trend in Zionism led by Rabbi I. J. Reines, sharply opposed a motion for the inclusion of cultural activities in the Congress program, but were defeated.

Similar differences over the cultural issue dominated the conference of Russian Zionists, held in Minsk in 1902. Ahad Haam advanced the slogan "Capture the School!" (to replace the former Zionist slogan "Capture the Kehillah!"). He proposed the formation of a special agency to conduct an educational program in Hebrew. The fight with the Mizrachi ended in the adoption of a compromise proposal setting up two separate cultural commissions—representing the "democratic" and religious parties respectively, and operating in complete independence of each other.

The suggestions of Ahad Haam were gradually put into effect. In 1903 and 1905, while the Zionist Congresses were in session, separate conferences of Hebrew cultural leaders were organized. A central committee, consisting of Nahum Sokolov, Joseph Klausner and S. L. Gordon, was entrusted with the task of creating a worldwide organization, Ivriyah, for the promotion of Hebrew culture. Owing to the revolutionary disturbances and pogroms in Russia, this body was never able to embark on its program. It was not until 1906 that an office, set up in Berne, Switzerland,

by a group of cultural workers, assumed the functions of the central committee.

In September 1907, during the Zionist Congress, an educational conference was held in The Hague, Holland, consisting of delegates from Palestine, France, Galicia, Germany, Great Britain, Romania, Russia, Sweden and the United States. Among other resolutions, the conference decided to establish a special educational committee whose tasks were to include supervision of textbooks, training of teaching personnel, publication of juvenile literature, and creation of a union of Hebrew teachers.

In Russia the Hebrew school movement gained momentum after the legalization in April 1907 of the Hovevei Sfat Ever Society (Lovers of the Hebrew Tongue). The Society's name had been taken over from an earlier group which, for many years, had functioned as the cultural commission of the Mefitzei Haskalah. By 1910 there were 60 branches of the new society, maintaining schools for boys and girls, kindergartens, evening classes and similar institutions. Meanwhile, in 1907, the Mefitzei Haskalah instituted training courses for teachers in Grodno which were to develop many of the outstanding Hebrew pedagogues. The Grodno courses continued uninterrupted until 1915 when they were transferred, under the impact of war, to Kharkov. Despite the explicit government ban on Hebrew as a medium of instruction, even in religious studies, not only Jewish subjects, but physics and chemistry as well, continued to be taught in Hebrew at the teachers' training courses.

A significant role in the revival of Hebrew was played by the Odessa Yeshivah which, under the directorship of Chaim Tchernowitz, after 1905 became one of the foremost centers of Hebrew education. Its faculty included H. N. Bialik and Joseph Klausner.

During 1909 and 1910 the first two Hebrew kindergartens were organized in Warsaw. The pioneers in this field were Yehiel Halpern and J. Alterman. While in Russia kindergartens could only be conducted in

the Russian language, the law in Russian-Poland permitted the use in the schools of the children's mother tongues. It was no easy matter, however, to persuade government officials in Warsaw that there were children in the city whose mother tongue was Hebrew. In 1910 Halpern's institution introduced training courses for kindergarten instructors. Child attendance here increased from 7 in 1909 to no less than 200 in 1914. In that year some 70 young women attended Halpern's training courses. In 1911 similar courses were also started by J. Alterman.

With the spread of the Hebrew school system a controversy arose among Jewish educators as to methods of instruction. Should Hebrew be taught by way of translation into another language, or by the system known as *Ivrit be-Ivrit* (Hebrew in Hebrew)? The latter method had been suggested as early as 1895 by Yehudah Gra-zovski in an article published in the Jerusalem periodical, *Hatzvi*. Gra-zovski's proposal was followed up by Yitzhak Epstein in his book *Ivrit be-Ivrit* (Warsaw, 1901) and by David Yellin in a work entitled *Le-Fi ha-Taf*, i.e. "For the Little Ones" (Warsaw, 1902). From 1908 to 1911 the question remained a central issue. Finally, despite the opposition of such prominent writers as Berdyczewski, Frischman, Bernfeld and Zeitlin, the Hebrew-in-Hebrew method was introduced in the modern Hebrew school.

In December 1909 the first convention for the promotion of the Hebrew language and culture was held in Berlin. The convention proclaimed Hebrew the national language of the Jewish people. At the tenth Zionist Congress (Basle, 1911) the following resolution was adopted: "All trends and parties at the Congress recognize unanimously that our educational and cultural work is closely bound up with the Hebrew language and the cultural heritage accumulated by our people in the course of thousands of years." As regards cultural work outside Palestine the Congress ruled that such work was to be conducted "autono-

mously by the respective organizations and national federations."

In 1913 the second convention for the promotion of the Hebrew language and culture assembled in Vienna. It established a central educational bureau and adopted a number of resolutions concerning the publication of textbooks, a Hebrew weekly for young people, the organization of Hebrew schools, and the training of Hebrew teachers.

The question of Hebrew education again assumed an important place at the conference of Russian Zionists, held prior to the eleventh Zionist Congress (Vienna, 1913). Vladimir Jabotinsky urged the establishment of schools where all subjects could be taught in Hebrew. Dr. Joseph Klausner and others were skeptical as to the practicability of such schools in the Diaspora. Nachman Syrkin and Yitzhak Gruenbaum demanded that the Hebrew school devote more attention to the Yiddish language. Jabotinsky's proposal was finally adopted with an amendment, introduced by Isaac Naiditch, giving priority to Yiddish over Russian in the event that the all-Hebrew school proved impracticable.

The preference for Yiddish or Hebrew as a medium of school instruction led to a conflict within the ranks of the Mefitzei Haskalah. The society's conference in 1911 decided to adopt both Yiddish and Hebrew in its schools. At a subsequent conference (1913) a bare majority voted to introduce Yiddish as the language of instruction. In the curriculum, obligatory for all Mefitzei Haskalah schools, 17 hours a week were assigned to the study of Hebrew.

## II. EDUCATION IN HEBREW BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

### 1. RUSSIA

Following the March Revolution in 1917 the Hebrew school movement in Russia expanded rapidly. The conference of the Hovevei Sfat Ever (April, 1917) resolved to found kindergartens, primary schools, trade courses, high schools, colleges, evening classes, yeshivot and semi-

naries for teachers and kindergarten instructors. At this conference it was decided to change the name of the society to Tarbut (Culture). The choice of language of instruction was a source of friction at the Tzeirei Zion (Young Zionist) Conference, convened in St. Petersburg in 1917. The left wing of the movement insisted upon Yiddish, but was overruled by the conference which voted for all-Hebrew schools.

At approximately this time the same problem was heatedly debated at the seventh Russian-Zionist conference in St. Petersburg. Leib Jaffe's motion giving Yiddish precedence over any non-Jewish language wherever a choice was possible, was carried.

From its very inception the Tarbut movement was able to produce substantial results. Almost 200 institutions for the furtherance of Hebrew education and culture sprang up during 1917. These included sixty kindergartens, three Hebrew high schools (in Kharkov, Baku and Samarkand), a teachers' seminary in Odessa, instructors' courses in Kharkov, a Froebel institute in Moscow, schools for the children of the indigenous Jews of the Caucasian mountain region, and evening classes in scores of cities throughout the country.

The union of Jewish teachers, meanwhile, was wracked by the unceasing struggle between Hebraists and Yiddishists. The former finally seceded from the organization and, in August 1917, called a separate conference of Hebrew teachers representing 1,500 educators throughout Russia. The conference rejected a proposal to introduce religious instruction in the Hebrew school. In this matter each individual teacher was to remain free to act in accordance with his conscience. A permanent organization of teachers, called Ha-Moreh (The Teacher), was established.

The decline of the Hebrew school movement in Russia set in after the October Revolution. In 1919 a law was passed by the Soviet Government, recognizing Yiddish as the language of the Jewish working class. Numerous Hebrew schools were

closed down, their buildings requisitioned and their assets confiscated. In August 1919 a new decree, issued by the Commissariat for Education, declared that, since Hebrew was not the vernacular of the Jewish masses, it should not be regarded as the language of a national minority, but as a foreign tongue. The directors of the remaining Hebrew schools had to report which of the languages recognized in the Soviet Union they would henceforth be willing to adopt in place of Hebrew.

In the Ukraine, too, sharp repressive measures were directed against cultural activities in Hebrew. On July 4, 1919, the Union of Jewish Communists (Komfarband) addressed a memorandum to the Commissariat for Internal Affairs, urging the proscription of the Zionist organization and its cultural and economic institutions. In response to this memorandum the whole Zionist movement was declared illegal, and among other Zionist organizations, the Tarbut with all its institutions was dissolved.

In 1924, and again in 1927, a group of eminent Jewish and Russian scholars submitted memoranda to the Soviet authorities against the persecution of Hebrew. Their efforts, however, remained fruitless. The official retort was still that Hebrew, like Latin and Greek, was a dead language, not spoken by the Jewish working masses. To this was added, however, that the law of the Soviet Union did not prohibit the writing and speaking of such languages as Greek, Latin or Hebrew.

In 1928 an illegal conference of Tarbut teachers addressed a memorandum to the renowned Russian author, Maxim Gorki, pleading for the legalization of Hebrew schools in the Soviet Union. No reply was received.

The only exception to the general rule was Turkistan. Its 60,000 Jews spoke Tadzhik, the primitive language of the local Moslem population. Since the general schools for Moslem children in Turkistan were using Turki as their medium of instruction, the authorities decided to allow

the use of Hebrew in the Jewish schools. The first congress of cultural leaders in Turkistan (August, 1920) acknowledged "the close kinship of the local Jewish population with Hebrew." The congress added that "from a political point of view, Hebrew cannot injure the development of socialist culture." In Turkistan a Hebrew textbook, entitled *Ha-Moledet* (The Fatherland), was even published under the auspices of the Commissariat for Education of the Soviet Republic of Turkistan.

## 2. POLAND

The first all-Hebrew primary schools in Poland were opened in Goniadz in 1916 (District of Bialystok), and in 1917 in Krinki (District of Grodno). Extensive cultural activities in Hebrew were at this time also conducted in Wilno where, at the turn of 1915, the first Hebrew high school in the Diaspora was founded. At the same time two Hebrew primary schools and two kindergartens came into being in Wilno. Hebrew evening classes with an attendance of 800 had been organized there as early as 1915. The attitude of the German occupation authorities towards Hebrew was negative. According to a law promulgated by Hindenburg, schools were permitted to give instruction only in the current mother tongue.

The third Zionist conference in Warsaw, held in October 1917, voted to introduce Hebrew as the language of instruction in Jewish schools. Yiddish was to be used only as an aid, to pave the way to a gradual transition to Hebrew. Dissenting groups which demanded the use of Yiddish as the medium of instruction remained in the minority.

The fourth Zionist conference (August 1919) was forced to compromise on the Ivrit be-Ivrit issue. Since the introduction of the all-Hebrew system was encountering technical difficulties, the conference ruled that in schools where Hebrew could not immediately be introduced as the sole language of instruction, Yiddish was to take its place, with provision for instruction in

specifically Hebrew subjects through the medium of Hebrew for no less than 12 hours per week. Furthermore, the study of Yiddish was to be included in the curriculum of such schools which had succeeded in introducing Hebrew as the language of instruction. Several of the delegates protested vehemently against the adoption of these resolutions as a surrender to Yiddishism.

In 1921 it was decided to create a Tarbut organization in Poland to administer the Hebrew schools and promote cultural activities in Hebrew generally. In the following year the first Hebrew national conference was called; the second and third took place in October 1924 and December 1927, respectively. The third Tarbut conference took a determined stand against the attempts of moderate Zionists to set up mixed Hebrew-Polish or Hebrew-Yiddish schools, on the ground that such schools might jeopardize the social and political prestige of the entire Hebrew school system. The conference called for an educational program founded on the "work principle," designed to train the Jewish people as a nation of workers both for Palestine and the Diaspora.

On the eve of World War II, Tarbut maintained 425 libraries (with a total of 290,000 volumes), many of them forming part of the Tarbut schools. Three children's magazines were distributed in a total of 20,000 copies. Several pedagogic journals were in circulation. Thirty Hebrew-speaking summer camps and day camps were used by 2,500 children.

The students at the Tarbut schools were drawn from the following social groups: artisans, 31 percent; shopkeepers, 29 percent; industrial workers, 11 percent; salaried workers, 9 percent; learned professions, 9 percent; businessmen, 4 percent; professions unknown, 7 percent. Thus, some 80 percent of the students derived from the lower income groups.

The financial condition of the schools was a source of constant anxiety. A survey conducted during the academic year 1934-

1935 revealed that the government contributed almost nothing to the upkeep of the Hebrew schools; the city councils covered only 2.1 percent of the budgets; the Jewish communities contributed 2.4 percent, while school fees accounted for 80 percent. In 1933-1934, 560 Hebrew teachers had a combined claim for unpaid salaries amounting to 680,000 zloties. Their average monthly earnings were 100 zloties. Many of them were paid for only six to eight months out of each year. The following Table shows the steady expansion of Hebrew education in Poland.

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>	<i>Number of Teachers</i>	<i>Number of Schools</i>
1918-19	2,575	233	51
1922-23	8,813	492	126
1927-28	21,543	886	227
1933-34	37,000	1,300	269

All attempts to liberalize the government's attitude towards Jewish national education, whether in Hebrew or in Yiddish, resulted in failure. In 1929 the Polish Government maintained no less than 1,611 primary schools for the German, Ukrainian, White Russian and Lithuanian minorities, each of these schools being conducted in the language of the respective national group. At the same time, the government did not open a single school with Hebrew or Yiddish as the language of tuition.

A motion introduced in the Sejm (Parliament) in May 1923 to make the study of Hebrew compulsory for Jewish children in primary and high schools was pigeonholed. In 1930 a proposal was made in the Sejm to set up government-sponsored Hebrew and Yiddish schools for Jewish children. Five years passed before this proposal was even brought up on the floor of the house. Then, in 1935, the question was removed from the agenda "in conformity with the new law (of 1932) by which national minority schools are no longer recognized."

Following promulgation of this new law, the persecution of the Jewish high schools

was resumed with even greater intensity. The time allotted to Hebrew studies was cut down by government order, Hebrew high schools were denied public privileges, numerous schools were shut down, ostensibly for hygienic reasons. The problem of putting up new school buildings became increasingly difficult. Yet, in 1938, 60 Tarbut schools had erected their own buildings, while another 60 had completed land purchases for this purpose.

Tarbut maintained three teachers' seminaries: one in Wilno, founded in 1921, another in Grodno, founded in 1926, and a third in Lwow, founded in 1925. In addition, a school for kindergarten teachers had been instituted in Wilno. A notable institution was the state seminary for Hebrew teachers which was established in 1918, based on the teachers' courses initiated by Dr. S. A. Poznanski two years previously. In 1932 the government embarked on a policy of gradually closing these seminaries, and Tarbut was forced to adapt itself to the new regulations.

The party composition of Tarbut is demonstrated by the following figures, taken at the organization's fourth conference in September 1931: of the 389 delegates, 95 represented the Hashomer Hatzair, 83 the General Zionists, 57 the Revisionists, 54 the Hitahdut (Poale Zion and related trends), and the rest, smaller groups.

### 3. THE BALTIC STATES

A. *Lithuania*: The small Jewish community of Lithuania (only 160,000 in number) possessed, relatively speaking, the most highly developed Hebrew school system. In 1932-1933 there were 139 Hebrew schools in the country, with a combined student body of 10,075. Of these 84, with an attendance of 5,365 students, belonged to Tarbut, and 44 to the Mizrahi system "Yavneh." Kindergartens in 1931-1932 numbered 24, a figure which in the next three years increased to 42, with 460 children attending. By 1937 more than 8,000 children were enrolled in 137 Hebrew primary schools, and 3,200 in 16 high schools.

The school law of May 23, 1925, laid down the general principles to which all educational institutions in Lithuania were to conform. Instruction was to be given in the native tongue. In schools where Lithuanian was not the mother tongue of the pupils, the Lithuanian language was to be taught—starting in the second school year—for no less than six hours per week. Jews were permitted to indicate Hebrew as their mother tongue. The administration of their schools was left in the hands of autonomous Jewish institutions. Subsequently, in the early thirties when this cultural autonomy was abolished, the Hebrew as well as the Yiddish school system was subjected to a process of intensified Lithuanization. Thanks to the combined exertions of the three Jewish school organizations, Tarbut, Yavneh and the Yiddishist Bildungsgesellschaft, (Society for Education), it was possible in some measure to retard the Lithuanization process.

Although the government continued to contribute toward the maintenance of the Jewish schools, its grant was drastically cut. Expenses were partly covered by school fees and partly by subsidies from the Jewish communities. The result of the government's policy was an increased attendance of Jewish children in general Lithuanian schools which charged no tuition fees.

In 1923 Tarbut established a teachers' seminary which, owing to financial difficulties, was forced to close down a few years later. Efforts in 1938 to induce the government to allow the resumption of teachers' courses with funds provided by Tarbut remained unsuccessful. Instead, a chair for Hebrew studies was founded at the state Pedagogic Institute. The University of Kaunas maintained a department for Hebrew literature and Judaistic studies.

B. *Latvia*: In accordance with the law of 1919 the Jews in Latvia, like other ethnic minorities, enjoyed rights of cultural autonomy. A special department of the Ministry of Education was in charge of the Jewish school system. However, the language of instruction in any given Jewish

school could be determined by the political or cultural organization which sponsored it. There were altogether five such organizations: CYSHO (Yiddishist), Moriah (of the orthodox Agudah), Union of Teachers (Assimilationist) which founded schools with Russian or German as the language of instruction, Tushiah (Mizrachi), and Ha-Moreh, which sponsored secular Hebrew schools. The Parents' Association Ivriyah collaborated with Ha-Moreh.

The pattern of Jewish education in Latvia in the early thirties is illustrated by the following Table:

<i>Language of Instruction</i>	<i>Kinder-gartens</i>	PRIMARY SCHOOLS			HIGH SCHOOLS		
		<i>Number of Schools 1933-34</i>	<i>Total Attendance 1932-1933</i>		<i>Number of Schools 1932-33</i>	<i>Total Attendance 1932-1933</i>	
			<i>In Numbers</i>	<i>In Percent</i>		<i>In Numbers</i>	<i>In Percent</i>
Hebrew.....	22	34	4,780	40.1	7	587	31.2
Yiddish.....	10	35	5,325	44.6	7	512	27.2
German.....	2	6	1,301	11.0	4	357*	19.2
Russian.....	—	3	514	4.3	—	325*	17.0
Lettish.....	—	—	—	—	1	101*	5.4
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>11,920</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1,882</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* In 1921-1922, Jewish pupils in high schools having German, Russian or Lettish as the languages of instruction numbered 3,000. By 1932-1933, as indicated in this table, the number had dropped to 783, and by the following year to 577.

The Yiddish and Hebrew schools after 1932 assigned two to three hours per week to Hebrew and Yiddish, respectively.

In May 1934, following the pro-fascist revolution, the national minorities departments of the Ministry of Education were abolished. A member of the Agudas Israel was put in charge of all matters touching upon Jewish education. In Riga and the provinces, the Agudah took over the administration of almost all Jewish schools. In 1938 only two Hebrew primary schools and one high school with a teaching staff of 35 and a student body of 1,500 survived in Riga under the sponsorship of Ha-Moreh.

C. *Estonia*: In Estonia, too, the national minorities were accorded cultural autonomy. The Estonian Jewish Cultural Coun-

cil was composed mostly of Zionists. The type of tuition in the Jewish school was the subject of a prolonged struggle between the Hebraists and Yiddishists. There were three primary schools, with a total enrollment of 230 children. One of these, with an attendance of 30, was all-Hebrew. In the other two, the Hebrew language as well as other Hebrew studies came to occupy an ever more prominent place. In 1925 the Jewish high school in Tallinn (Reval) with a student body of 100, introduced Hebrew as the medium of instruction instead of Russian. The three Hebrew kindergartens

in Estonia looked after 105 children. Tarbut maintained Hebrew evening classes for adults.

#### 4. ROMANIA

A. *Bessarabia*: In the school year 1921-1922, the Hebrew school system of Bessarabia comprised 40 Hebrew schools, 20 kindergartens and 15 high schools with a combined staff of 450 and a student body of 10,000. In addition, there were several teachers' courses and one kindergarten instructors' school. Following the assumption of power by the so-called Liberal Party in 1922, the Hebrew schools were increasingly harassed. The Hebrew high schools and teachers' seminary were closed down. In 1925 conditions somewhat improved. The "Jewish language" was recognized in principle as the language of instruction in

Jewish schools, provided that the Romanian language, as well as the history and geography of the country be taught in Romanian.

By 1938 Bessarabia had 35 Hebrew schools with 3,632 pupils, 14 kindergartens with 415 children, and 10 junior high schools with 1,364 pupils—a total of 5,411 students and 291 teachers. Some 50 percent of these schools were actually Talmud Torahs with Hebrew as the language of instruction. Tarbut maintained no less than 35 branch offices throughout Bessarabia. School fees covered 45 percent of the budgets. Forty percent of the children were given instruction free of charge; an additional 30 percent were granted substantial reductions. However, the financial position of these schools was one of constant insecurity.

*B. Bucovina:* In 1920 an institute for Hebrew kindergarten teachers was founded in Czernowitz (Cernauti). During the years of the democratic regime in Romania (1918-1921) the study of Hebrew was obligatory for all Jewish children in government schools. The state high school in Czernowitz, the majority of whose 1,200 pupils were Jewish, functioned under Zionist influence. In 1921 matters took a less favorable turn when a Romanization drive was initiated in all state schools. Nevertheless, in the following year a Hebrew school was organized for Hebrew teachers. An attempt made in 1930 to found a Hebrew high school proved abortive. In 1934 two Hebrew schools, both primary, operated in Bucovina: the first was attended by 120 pupils, the second, maintained by the community, had an attendance of 400. Other educational institutions included 15 kindergartens with 500 children and 23 teachers; 19 evening classes with 440 students and 19 teachers; a teachers' seminary and a school for kindergarten teachers with 45 students and 13 instructors.

##### 5. CENTRAL EUROPE

*A. Germany:* During the years of the Weimar Republic, the Jewish community

of Berlin sponsored a Sprachschule for the study of Hebrew, and the Zionist Organization founded a Schulverein (School Association) which maintained its own Hebrew school with 500 pupils. However, in both these schools the study of Hebrew was limited almost entirely to the reading of the Bible. After 1933, coincident with increased emigration to Palestine, there was a growing urge among German Jews to learn Hebrew. At the end of 1935 a seminary for Hebrew teachers was founded with a student body of 30. In 1934 close to 2,000 Jewish children and adults in Berlin were learning Hebrew in schools and evening classes. In the whole of Germany there were in that year some 15,000 Hebrew students. By 1937 the figure had dropped to 5,000, partly as a result of the shortage of teachers which could not be remedied as government regulations made it impossible for teaching personnel to come to Germany from abroad.

*B. Austria:* In 1934 there were 24,000 Jewish children of school age in Austria. Of these, only 1,700 were receiving Hebrew education. The rest were limited to religious classes in the general schools, attended two hours per week. In 1933 the Jewish communities in Austria began to found Bibelschulen, supplementary schools for the teaching of the Bible and of Hebrew. In that year, 1,600 young people were taking Hebrew courses. The Histadrut Ivrit (Organization for the Promotion of Hebrew Culture) set up a postgraduate course for teachers, actively supported by an association of parents.

*C. Czechoslovakia:* Only in the province of Carpatho-Russia (Ruthenia), did a Hebrew school system function. The first Hebrew school opened here in 1920 with 45 pupils. Seven such schools flourished by 1937 with a total of more than 700 children. In 1924 a Hebrew high school was founded in Munkacevo (Munkacs) with 46 students. By 1936-1937 the number of students had increased to 380, drawn from 72 different places in Carpatho-Russia and Eastern Slovakia. In 1937 the government



incorporated the Hebrew schools in the general framework of state schools. When Carpatho-Russia was ceded to Hungary (1939), the schools were compelled to adopt Hungarian as the language of instruction. Hebrew was thenceforth taught only a few hours per week.

#### 6. OTHER COUNTRIES

*Bulgaria:* Bulgaria was the only Balkan country which had developed a Hebrew school system. The Zionists here carried on a protracted campaign to gain control of the Alliance Israélite Universelle schools where the medium of instruction was French. In 1901 they succeeded in taking over the first of these schools. Gradually the rest of the Alliance schools were drawn into the Zionist orbit to form the basis of a system of Hebrew education in Bulgaria. The schools were administered by the educational department of the "Consistory," (the official representation of Bulgaria's Jews, recognized by the government in 1927). In 1925 a pedagogic course for teachers was organized.

Eighty percent of all Jewish children in Bulgaria attended Hebrew schools. In 1932-1933 the list of schools read as follows: 15 kindergartens, 21 primary schools and five high schools with a combined staff of 150 and an attendance of 3,715. Many of the school children received free meals and clothing. The schools were in the main supported by the Jewish communities and charged no fees.

Moderate subsidies were forthcoming from local town councils.

*Yugoslavia:* One supplementary school in Sarajevo, called Safah Brurah, comprising 100 students, and seven kindergartens with over 200 children, represented the extent of Hebrew education in Yugoslavia.

*Greece, Egypt and Turkey:* In these three countries Hebrew was taught to a greater or lesser extent in all Alliance Israélite Universelle schools.

In *Morocco* in 1939 the Magen David Society set up Hebrew courses for 500 children. There were similar courses in *Tunis*.

In 1929 a Hebrew girls' school was established in *Aden* with 130 pupils. The older boys' school, founded in 1907, has in recent years begun to devote more time to the teaching of Hebrew and Jewish history.

#### 7. SUMMARY

By and large the Hebrew school system was based on the secularist outlook and modern educational principles. Considerable emphasis was placed upon the development of social-mindedness in the child.

The general educational aims as formulated at the Tarbut conference in Poland in 1922 were the following: (a) harmonious development of all physical and intellectual resources; (b) fostering of an integrated moral and social individuality; and (c) encouragement of a nationally-productive personality. Self-government, self-aid and cooperation among the pupils were emphasized throughout. Coeducation was the rule in the secular Hebrew schools.

In Lithuania and in Latvia, Yiddish was taught as a separate subject in Hebrew schools. In Poland, too, this system was approved in the resolutions of several Tarbut conferences.

The central organization for the Hebrew school and cultural movement was the Brit Irvit Olamit (World Hebrew Association) with headquarters in Tel Aviv. It published a periodical called *Am ve-Sefer* (People and Book). The international Union of Hebrew Teachers (founded in Vienna in 1925), whose administrative headquarters were also in Palestine, collaborated with the Brit Irvit Olamit and maintained close relations with the International Federation of Teachers in Paris and the International Association for Education in Geneva.

### III. EDUCATION IN HEBREW DURING AND AFTER WORLD WAR II

#### 1. UNDER GERMAN OCCUPATION

During the first years of Nazi rule, Polish Jews tried by various means to keep their schools and orphanages alive. In Warsaw, according to Dr. N. Eck, the Jews opened

a number of new schools in the first months of German occupation, which later had to be closed down. At the end of April 1941, the Jewish community of Warsaw received the long-awaited permission to open communal schools. Five thousand children were enrolled in these schools, which included three Tarbut schools with tuition in Hebrew. Classes were larger than they had ever been before the war. There was also a Hebrew school called "Yavneh" under Mizrahi auspices.

Many house committees organized groups to study Hebrew. The Halutz Youth Organization instituted Hebrew courses on the hahsharah (training farms), and helped with the organization of children's groups. In Warsaw, there was a teachers' seminary the staff of which included such scholars as Dr. Yitzhak Schipper and Dr. Meyer Balaban.

On the initiative of Moshe Olitzky, for many years leader of the Hebrew Teachers' Union, a United School Committee was created in Wilno representing all groupings and tendencies. In September 1941 over 2,700 children of school age (6-14) were registered in the Wilno Ghetto. Parity was established between teachers of Hebrew and Yiddish, and a combined school came into existence. All schools and all classes in the Ghetto introduced a large measure of instruction in Hebrew and Hebrew literature.

The primary schools had an attendance of 2,200 children. There were also numerous study groups among the Jews who lived outside the Ghetto in the so-called workers' blocks. Jewish primary schools were also in existence in Western Galicia and in the Lublin District.

In Lodz during the 1940-1941 school year, the Jewish schools had a registration of 17,235 children. Because of lack of space, only 13,079 were admitted to primary schools, and 1,278 to the high school. Forty-three schools were in operation at that time, employing 414 teachers; instruction was given in Yiddish, but the Hebrew language was also studied. A prominent place

was allotted to religious studies. The liquidation of the "autonomy" of the Ghetto and with it the Jewish school coincided with the beginning of the extermination of Polish Jewry.

In other invaded countries as well, such as Lithuania, Latvia and Romania, Hebrew schools and orphanages were maintained in the first years of the Nazi occupation.

## 2. AFTER THE LIBERATION

After the liberation of Poland, Yiddish and Hebrew schools began to revive. At the end of 1947, there were in Poland 12,000 Jewish children of school age (before the war their number was nearly half a million). Of these 2,700 were in attendance at schools with instruction in Yiddish, and more than 1,200 attended Hebrew schools, which employed 90 teachers. The first Hebrew schools were organized in Lodz and Reichenbach (Silesia). Later, the Hebrew schools became the target of communist persecution and the schools in Bytom, Sosnowice and Byelsko were closed down.

About the middle of 1946, Hehalutz took the initiative in forming a "Geulat Hayeladim" (Children's Redemption) Committee in Lodz. Its task was to save for Judaism Jewish children who had been kept in non-Jewish homes or monasteries, as well as to take care of orphaned children who had been repatriated to Poland from the Soviet Union. The Coordination Committee, which took charge of rescued Jewish children between the ages of 2 to 13, included representatives of all Zionist parties, as well as of all the Zionist youth movements. At present (1948), the Committee directs the work of a number of children's settlements, where the children receive a Hebrew-Zionist upbringing, in preparation for resettlement in Palestine. Another facet of the work was the organization of a seminary to train educators, under the leadership of members of the Halutz movements.

## 3. IN THE DISPLACED PERSONS' CAMPS

Immediately after the victory over Germany, when large numbers of Jews were

assembled in the Displaced Persons' Camps, schools for the children of the inmates were organized. The first of these was established in September 1945 in Fernwald, with a student body of approximately 30 children of various ages and from various countries. Later, schools were set up in Landsberg, Feldafing and Neu-Freiman.

The initiative in founding schools was taken by individuals, either from among former teachers or the rank and file. The American Joint Distribution Committee helped in sustaining the first schools. The work was given greater impetus in the spring of 1946, when representatives of the Jewish Agency for Palestine arrived at the camps, bringing the first Hebrew textbooks as a gift from Palestinian children to the children in the camps.

In November 1946, there were as many as 70 schools in the camps of Germany, including one high school in Munich, 3 high schools in Fernwald, Feldafing and Regensburg (still lacking the upper grades), and 66 primary schools. There were also 30 nurseries, some of them connected with schools, others functioning as independent institutions. Approximately 700 teachers were by that time engaged in teaching nearly 12,000 children. The number of professional teachers among them was very small, however.

The curriculum of the schools included Bible, Jewish history, Hebrew, arithmetic, Palestinography, world history, and geography. Some of the schools also taught Yiddish as well as some subjects in Yiddish. Attention was mainly given to Hebrew studies, because the overwhelming majority of the Displaced Persons in the camps intended to go to Palestine. Singing, dramatics, sports, etc., also occupied a prominent place in these improvised schools.

Several teachers' conferences were held. At a conference (March 18-19, 1947), a Directorate of Culture and Education was established to supervise the schools and maintain close contact with the Central Committee of Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany, as well as with the Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish Agency.

From March to October 1947, 18 different textbooks in Hebrew were published for these schools. There were also 10 textbooks in Yiddish for adults and children and 11 issues of a small people's library containing stories by Yiddish classic writers such as Mendeleyev, Peretz and Sholem Aleichem.

In November 1947 the American zone in Germany boasted 81 Jewish schools, with an attendance of 9,000; these included 27 schools with up to 40 pupils each in small camps and in newly-established communities, and 49 nursery schools taking care of 1,930 children. The teaching staff numbered 690 teachers and 125 nursery-school teachers. There were also 12 evening schools for adults, with a combined attendance of 700. These schools provided 16 hours of instruction weekly—in Hebrew, Yiddish, English, history, mathematics, physics, the natural sciences and Palestinography.

Numerous religious schools of various types were also in existence within the camps: "Yavneh" schools under Mizrahi auspices, hadarim directed by the Agudah, "Yesodei Hatorah" and the "Bet Yaakov" schools for girls, organized by the latter body. The main types of Talmud schools were "Tomchei Tmimim" yeshivot (under the auspices of the Hasidic Habad), the "Yeshiva Hakmei Lublin," and the "Merkaz Hatorah" for youths from Lithuanian yeshivot.

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# THE YIDDISH SECULAR SCHOOL MOVEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

C. S. Kazdan

## INTRODUCTION

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## INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the last century the growth of Yiddish literature became a potent factor in Jewish life throughout Eastern Europe. The possibilities of modernizing Jewish education with the Yiddish language as the chief instrumentality were widely discussed. At the same time, the labor movement amongst Russian Jews brought in its wake an urgent need for a new start in adult education and for an entirely new type of regular school.

The general outlook of the Jewish socialists, the organized workers and the sympathetic intelligentsia alike, was determined by their strong opposition to the powers that be, including Jewish religious hegemony over Jewish life. This radical section of Russian Jewry regarded tra-

ditional Jewish education as an obstacle to social emancipation, to be replaced by a system adjusted to the newly proclaimed social and political ideals. This implied that the new educational system had to be basically secularist and, insofar as the medium of instruction was concerned, firmly rooted in the people's common speech. In contrast to the Zionist movement which promoted the revival of Hebrew as a spoken language among adults and children alike, the revolutionary elements of Russian Jewry, in concurrence with the democratically-minded adherents of Yiddishism, were bent on the cultivation of the everyday language of the plain man and woman. Secular education through the medium of Yiddish thus became the starting point of an altogether new development in the history of Jewish education.

## I. RUSSIA

### 1. BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

The beginning of the present century witnessed the growth of a comprehensive system of evening schools, for both young and old, in which every subject was taught in the Yiddish language. In the teeth of the government's opposition, illegal attempts were made to establish all-Yiddish primary schools for young children. The number of modern Yiddish textbooks increased steadily, as well as the number of teachers who recognized the political and pedagogic need for Yiddish language schools. In 1907 at a special educational conference in Wilno, Yiddish was pro-

claimed the national language of the Jews and recommended as the medium of instruction in Jewish schools. A year later, a similar declaration was made by Yiddish authors and publicists at their convention in Czernowitz. In the schools maintained and subsidized by the Hevrah Mefitzei Haskalah (Society for the Dissemination of Enlightenment) the curriculum was gradually enlarged to admit courses in the Yiddish language and literature. In a number of places clandestine Yiddish schools, actually came into being.

The outbreak of the First World War and the forced evacuation of hundreds of thousands of Jews from their old-established homes had far-reaching repercussions on Jewish education. The vigilance of the Tsarist administration was weakening just at the point when the national consciousness of the Jewish masses was becoming more pronounced. Thus, nurseries, kindergartens and schools, organized for the children of war-stricken and homeless Jews after 1915, were for the most part conducted openly in Yiddish. These institutions represented the first organized effort to establish a modern Yiddish secularist school system.

In the aftermath of World War I and the Russian Revolution, the various newly created states on Russia's borders (Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia) and, to some extent, Romania, were confronted with a network of Yiddish-language schools which had sprung up spontaneously with the support of the various Jewish communities. Thenceforth the history of the Yiddish school movement differs from country to country, according to the degree of Jewish political disenfranchisement and the general condition of the Jewish population in the Eastern European countries.

## 2. UKRAINE (1917-1920)

The first large-scale experiment in Yiddish secular school education was made in this part of old Russia in April 1917, immediately after the victory of the Rev-

olution and the proclamation of the "Autonomous Ukraine". The newly founded Ministry of Jewish Affairs issued a series of decrees intended to administer internal Jewish affairs in general and Jewish education in particular. On January 9, 1918, the law guaranteeing "national-personal" autonomy was passed by the Central Diet (Rada) of the Ukraine; it followed a decision to safeguard the language rights of all national minorities (for the Jews it was Yiddish). The Jewish Ministry undertook to organize a Jewish secular school system to comprise all levels of education. However, the overthrow of the democratic regime quickly led to the liquidation of the Jewish Ministry. A conference of Jewish socialist and democratic groups was hastily assembled and, in May 1918, a society called the "Culture League" was set up to assume responsibility for all Yiddish educational and cultural institutions in the country.

At that time the former institutions included 42 kindergartens, 11 orphanages, 7 children's clubs, 9 playgrounds, 63 primary schools, 5 teachers' seminars, 23 evening classes, 3 high schools, 54 libraries, 12 major bookstores, a dramatic studio, an art school, a publishing house, a night school for adults, and a great number of choirs and dramatic circles—a total of 283 institutions functioning under the aegis of the Culture League. The League's headquarters were in Kiev, though its branches were most active in such cities and towns as Yelisavetgrad, Yekaterinoslav, Berdichev, Odessa, Tcherkassy and Belaya Tserkov.

A great many departments and commissions collaborated within the framework of the Culture League, notably the "Democratic Union of Teachers" (the school section of the Culture League). The latter drafted the school curricula, published a pedagogic journal (*Shul un Lebn*) and produced a rich store of juvenile literature as well as numerous textbooks.

Towards the end of 1920, following the protracted civil war, the Soviet Govern-

ment established itself firmly in the Ukraine, and the Jewish communities were subjected to the general process of "communization." The Culture League was disbanded, and its institutions were handed over to the People's Commissariat for Education. Only the Culture League Publishing House was permitted to retain its name and to carry on its activities.

Thus the groundwork was laid for the establishment of a Yiddish school system in the Ukraine. Upon these foundations the Soviet authorities were to develop a network of Yiddish educational and cultural institutions.

### 3. SOVIET RUSSIA

The People's Commissariat for Nationalities, which was founded in 1917, included a Commissariat for Jewish National Affairs. In March 1918 the latter organized a Culture and Education Department and published a statement of the department's plans for future activity.

In 1924 the Commissariat for Nationalities with its Jewish departments was liquidated and replaced by a simplified agency. Jewish national affairs were thenceforth deprived of organized governmental representation and guidance, and entrusted to the "Jewish Sections" of the Communist Party. But in 1930 the "Jewish Sections" (Yevsektzies), too, were liquidated. The supervision of Jewish educational and similar activities in White Russia, Ukraine and in the R.S.F.S.R. fell to special divisions of the general Commissariats for education. In these regions the provincial and local educational authorities also included Jewish educational bureaus and, in some cases, "Culture Inspectors."

The initial results in the field of school development seemed highly promising, but the trend did not last. With the liquidation of the "Jewish Sections" in 1930 the Soviet Government began to revise its previous attitude to Yiddish education. Even before this turnabout the Jewish communists had declared that "in our hands our activities in Yiddish and all our institutions are

merely an instrument to further the socialist process, and every attempt to treat the Yiddish language, the school, etc., as an autonomous end rather than as a subserving instrument for Socialism must inevitably turn into Yiddishism and nationalism." This tendency to negate the value of Yiddish for the younger generation now became the official Soviet policy. Active promotion of Yiddish education gave way to a process of "Russification" and "Ukrainization." The consequences of the new attitude were not slow to make themselves felt; during the thirties the Yiddish school system in Soviet Russia steadily disintegrated.

During the first 15 years of Soviet rule the Yiddish-language schools increased both in strength and number. For instance, in 1924-25, White Russia had 140 Yiddish schools with 19,085 pupils (41 percent of all children in White Russia whose mother tongue was Yiddish); by 1929-30 the number of schools had increased to 209 and the student body to 28,310; in 1931-32 the schools numbered 334, with a total of 33,398 pupils (64 percent of all Yiddish-speaking children); the figures for 1932-33 were 339 schools with 36,501 pupils.

In 1932-33 the following percentage of Jewish children of school age attended Yiddish primary schools:

Byelorussia (White Russia) .. 55.5 percent  
Ukraine ..... 49.6 percent  
R.S.F.S.R. (Great Russia) .. 8.0 percent

For schools of all types, statistics for the year 1930-31 were as follows:

<i>Area</i>	<i>Number of Schools</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>
Ukraine .....	831	94,872
Byelorussia .....	262	31,340
R.S.F.S.R. ....	110	11,000
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>1,203</b>	<b>137,212</b>

With the addition of 266 kindergartens and nurseries, over 160,000 Jewish children in Soviet Russia were receiving a Yiddish education.

The qualitative improvement of the Yiddish school system went hand in hand with its expansion. By 1930 there were 30 Yiddish industrial and technical schools in the country, while a number of Yiddish departments were attached to the higher schools at Odessa, Kiev, Kharkov and other places. Schools for Yiddish teachers and technical instructors were established in Odessa, Zhitomir, Vinnitsa, Minsk, Vitebsk and Smolensk. A great volume of literature was published for schools and teachers. Between 1923 and 1928, 212 textbooks appeared.

The decline of the Yiddish school system in Soviet Russia set in during the middle thirties. By 1933-34 the Ukraine maintained only 251 all-year kindergartens, 505 seasonal playgrounds and 467 Yiddish primary and secondary schools with a student body of 85,459—a marked setback as compared with the above figures for 1930-31, when there were 364 more schools and 9,413 more children in attendance.

With increasing frequency and insistence, the Yiddish press began to complain of the reluctance of parents to send their children to Yiddish schools. In several areas the complete suspension of the Yiddish schools was openly discussed; to replace them, it was suggested that Yiddish be introduced in general schools as a separate subject. Enrollment in the first grades of the Yiddish schools continued to drop at a catastrophic rate.

According to J. Lestschinsky, no more than 85,000-90,000 Jewish children throughout Soviet Russia attended Yiddish schools in 1940. This amounted approximately to 20 percent of the Jewish children of school age. Of these, 50,000 lived in the Ukraine; about 25,000 in White Russia; some 3,000 in Birobidjan; 3,000 in the Crimea; approximately 5,000 in the Western parts of Great Russia, and some 2,000 were scattered in the remaining territories of the Soviet Union.

Relevant Soviet publications appearing in the years immediately preceding World

War II, confined themselves to generalizations and refrained from giving figures as to the state of the Yiddish school system. But all indirect information tends to indicate that prior to the war the Yiddish schools in Soviet Russia had suffered a steady loss, both in numbers and importance. The war served to hasten the decline.

As regards the internal pedagogic development of the Yiddish school in Soviet Russia, the first phase was marked by numerous educational experiments and enthusiastic emulation of model institutions (such as the Malakhovka Children's Colony). This was followed by the practice of compulsory Yiddish education, although the authorities looked with suspicion on evidences of nationalism and Yiddishism. The prevailing tendency in the schools still favored revolutionary-socialist education. Principles of free education, and creative methods of tuition ("projects," "complexes") were widely applied. Gradually an urge developed to make the study of the Yiddish language and literature more exhaustive. But here the Yiddish school came up against a well-nigh insoluble problem of polyglottism, for the Jewish children were already obliged to learn three, and sometimes four, different languages (Yiddish, Russian, Ukrainian or White Russian, and one foreign language). Nor did the Yiddish school know whether, or to what extent, Jewish history should be taught. Existing textbooks made almost no mention of Jewish life in other countries. Since 1931 there has been no further evidence of creative pedagogy in the Yiddish school.

## II. POLAND

### 1. THE CENTRAL YIDDISH SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

With the outbreak of the First World War and the organization of relief for Jewish refugees, a number of Yiddish schools for refugee children sprang up in Warsaw. Subsequently, these also opened their doors to the children of destitute local Jewish

families. With the active support of Y. L. Peretz, a permanent Yiddish kindergarten was founded. Several more were organized immediately after his death (1915), and gradually transformed into primary schools. By 1920, Warsaw could boast 14 Yiddish kindergartens and 14 primary schools with an average three-year curriculum, giving instruction to a total of 2,000 children.

There was a similar development in the provinces. Here, too, the war years were marked by a spontaneous growth of educational institutions where the children were taught in their Yiddish mother tongue.

On February 7, 1917, a "School Committee" was set up in Warsaw, consisting of V. Medem, J. Raichman and J. Dinesohn. Backed by financial aid from America (People's Relief), the Committee subsidized the existing institutions and soon became the central agency for all Yiddish-secular schools in the country, extending its activities to the field of pedagogic research and school administration.

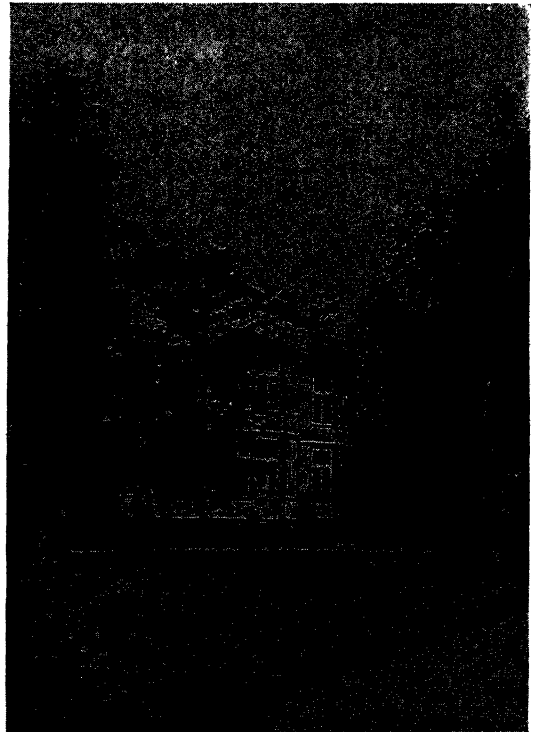
In Wilno the war years witnessed the formation of a widespread Yiddish-secular school system. In 1921 Wilno's Yiddish schools included 13 primary schools with average five-year courses and an attendance of 2,588 pupils; a high school with 470 students; 7 kindergartens with 525 children; 5 evening schools with 20 classes and 775 children. The sum total of 4,358 children represented two-thirds of the Jewish children attending Jewish schools of all descriptions.

The newly-formed Polish Republic had at this time (1921) an extensive system of schools, kindergartens and miscellaneous educational institutions functioning in the Yiddish language, all established during the war years or in the first year of Polish independence.

Before long the various schools came to see the necessity for a central directing agency to coordinate their work. The first cultural conference aiming at such coordination met in Warsaw on October

14-16, 1919. A second conference took place on April 11-12, 1920, and announced the establishment of the "Yiddish Central School Organization of Poland, Lithuania and White Russia."

As a result, a major national convention was held in June, 1921, with an attendance of 400 delegates representing the entire Yiddish-secular school system of Poland. The delegates comprised four groups: representatives of the Bund, of the Left Poale Zion, of the Union of the Jewish Socialist Party and Zionist-Socialists ("Fareinikte"), and one politically independent group. A main subject of discussion was the nature of Jewish Socialist education. The convention announced the formation of the "Central Yiddish School Organization of the Polish Republic" (CYSHO), and appointed an executive staff. This executive body called a convention of parents, set up



*From The Vanished World by R. Abramovitch,  
New York, 1947*

MEDEM SANATORIUM NEAR WARSAW, POLAND,  
FOUNDED BY THE JEWISH LABOR MOVEMENT IN  
THE 1920's



a centralized teachers' organization, and began publishing extensive educational literature, including the periodicals *Shul un Lebn* (School and Life) and *Di Naye Shul* (The New School). CYSHO, furthermore, assumed supervisory authority over the entire Yiddish school system in Poland; branch offices were established throughout the country and trade unions enlisted to support the movement.

From the outset, the Polish Government adopted a hostile attitude towards the Yiddish schools—due partly to their radical educational approach, and to the fact that Yiddish was the language of instruction.

It had been the government's intention to make use of the Jews of Volhynia, White Russia and Lithuania as "Polonizing agents" among the local populations. Accordingly, the CYSHO schools were subjected to systematic persecution, and many were closed down on various flimsy pretexts. Such discrimination and repression were practised by the government even in Warsaw. More discouraging even than official opposition was the problem of financial management. The government refused to subsidize the schools, and the parents, for the most part, were in no position to pay sufficient school fees to cover the budget.

But among the parents generally, and among working class parents in particular, the Yiddish schools were in high esteem, and despite all obstacles the newly established school system continued firm. When the second school convention assembled on April 19, 1925, it represented 91 primary schools with five-year courses and an attendance of 16,364 students; 20 kindergartens with 450 children; 63 night schools with 176 departments and 4,500 students; 3 high schools with 780 students—a total of 177 institutions with a student body of 22,094. The most significant decision of this convention was to the effect that "membership in the school organization is open to all who recognize the secular character of the school and the place of Yiddish as the language of instruction." It was at

this convention, too, that the establishment of the Yiddish Scientific Institute (Yivo) was endorsed.



*Courtesy Yiddish Scientific Institute  
(Yivo), New York*

THE YIDDISH FOLKSHUL IN PINSK, POLAND

At the beginning of the thirties, the persecution of the schools at the hands of the government was intensified. The very existence of CYSHO was threatened. In 1934-1935 CYSHO maintained 11 kindergartens, 86 primary schools, 2 high schools, 5 afternoon schools and 65 evening schools—a total of 169 institutions, with 623 classes, 15,486 students and 842 teachers. (In the years immediately preceding the war the students numbered nearly 17,000). But if the CYSHO school system was regressing numerically, it could boast a signal improvement in the methods of instruction, particularly in the major cities. The financial backing of the schools was provided by school fees, monthly contributions from the members of Jewish trade unions, fundraising campaigns within the country and abroad, contributions from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and subsidies from the municipalities.

CYSHO also assumed responsibility for the postgraduate training of teachers. At the end of 1928 it opened a teachers' seminary in Warsaw which was maintained for two years and graduated 40 students. It proved impossible, however, to secure a charter for the seminary from the Ministry of Education. The seminary in Wilno, founded in November 1921, was more

fortunate. In 1925-1926 it obtained the right to conduct state-approved examinations in Yiddish, and its graduates were authorized to teach in the Yiddish-secular schools. The Wilno seminary developed rapidly and its curriculum was expanded into a four-year course of study. Nevertheless, in 1931 it, too, was closed down by the government, ostensibly for reasons of political security.

During this same period CYSHO organized numerous local, regional and national teachers' conferences, as well as short-term instruction courses for teachers. The latter were thus enabled to complete their training, while the conferences helped them to perfect methods of instruction and to work out school programs in the various disciplines. In the drafting of curricula they were aided by the extensive educational and pedagogic literature published by CYSHO in the course of its 20-year period of existence. From 1919 to 1930 *Di Naye Shul*, the magazine devoted to pedagogic theory, appeared regularly; *Shul un Lebn*, a propaganda publication of a social-pedagogic character, appeared from 1921 to 1927; a third publication, *Shulvegn* (School Paths) was devoted to the practical and theoretical problems of teachers and school managers, and appeared from 1933

graphy, etc.; general plans of instruction, bibliographies, and over 40 textbooks and readers.

CYSHO also undertook several scientific research projects and pedagogic experiments relating to children's interests and ideals, their intellectual and physical faculties, their capacity for self-government and participation in social activities. Other projects studied mentally defective or retarded children. Numerous exhibitions displayed the achievements of the CYSHO schools. In December 1929 Warsaw had an exhibition showing the work of the Yiddish secular schools throughout the country. In March 1935 the Mendeleyev Mocher Seforim exhibition opened in Warsaw—the first attempt at a "literary" exhibition devoted to one writer; it was followed in April 1937 by the Sholem Aleichem exhibition, attended by 61,000 visitors and subsequently shown in Wilno.

The fundamental educational principles of the CYSHO schools may be summarized as follows: mother tongue, secularism, cultivation of activity and self-help, self-government and active participation in school affairs by the children, and finally, close cooperation with the parents. The course of study lasted seven years, during which all subjects, with the exception of Polish, were taught in the Yiddish language. The curriculum adhered closely to that laid down by the government for all primary schools in the country. The specifically Jewish subjects included Yiddish language and literature, Jewish history and the study of the home environment. The teaching of Hebrew was optional, and some 50 percent of the CYSHO schools maintained Hebrew classes. Each school was affiliated with its respective central board.

## 2. THE SHUL-KULT

At its inception CYSHO enjoyed the support of the right wing Poale Zion. However, in 1928 the Poale Zion, favoring bilingualism (the study of both Hebrew and Yiddish as national languages), seceded from CYSHO and, assisted by a group of



Photo Forbert

CHILDREN'S COLONY "YEHUDIT" IN DLUGOSIODLO,  
POLAND

to 1939. In addition, CYSHO published a series of educational programs for the teaching of Yiddish, history, biology, geo-

Zionists with Yiddishist sympathies, formed a new school organization called the Shul un Kultur Farband (School and Culture Association), abbreviated to Shul-Kult.

Shul-Kult did not succeed in fully developing its own school system in Poland. The following figures show the distribution of Shul-Kult schools for 1934-1935:

<i>Schools</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number of Pupils</i>
Primary.....	7	1,818
Afternoon Schools..	3	317
Kindergartens.....	6	208
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2,343</b>

One of the Shul-Kult institutions was the Wilno primary school (attendance 400-500) which had seceded from the CYSHO school system. The ideological and pedagogic character of the Shul-Kult was stated in its initial proclamation: "We come to build such schools as may truly bear the name of Jewish people's schools; schools in which the Jewish child may be raised as a free man and a complete Jew; schools in which the child is torn neither from his rich historic past, nor from the life which surrounds him . . . In such schools a proper place must be accorded to the study of Hebrew and the Bible." The Shul-Kult report of 1930 states: "Shul-Kult sets itself the task of creating a popular mass movement for a Jewish secular school system . . . The existing school organizations are not in a position to fulfill this task . . . The object throughout is to demonstrate the inner connection between current Yiddish creativity and the ancient springs of Jewish culture. Familiarity with Palestine and Jewish demography occupy an important place in our system of instruction."

### 3. THE THREE COMPONENTS

The three components of the entire Jewish educational system within independent Poland were: the religious, the Yiddish-and-Hebrew-secular, and the Polish (Polish-Hebrew high schools, state primary schools for Jewish children and non-Jewish

private high schools). The relative strength of these elements is indicated by the following figures:

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number of Institutions</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Religious.....	2,560	171,577	29.5
Yiddish—and— Hebrew—Secular	454	54,829	9.3
Polish.....		355,091	61.2
<b>Total.....</b>		<b>581,497</b>	<b>100.0</b>

If we consider only those Jewish children who were receiving some form of Jewish education, we find CYSHO, Tarbut (See article on the Hebrew School Movement in this volume) and Shul-Kult were responsible for the education of 24 percent; the rest frequented the religious schools. However, as all religious education was mostly conducted in the Yiddish language, education in Yiddish (including Yiddish classes in Tarbut schools) was actually given to 226,406 children. On the other hand, a great many children included in the Polish component were simultaneously attending Jewish schools. On the assumption that there were in Poland nearly half a million Jewish children of school age, it can safely be said that at least 50 percent of them received some kind of education in Yiddish.

### 4. AFTER THE LIBERATION

On the conclusion of the war and the return of Jews to Poland from camps, forests and other hiding places, and later from Soviet Russia, they began to build schools and orphanages for the surviving children. Already in November 1946, a teachers' conference was held in Lodz to define principles and map out the line of development of the new school. According to the Central Committee of Polish Jews there were 33 Yiddish-language primary schools in Poland in 1947 with a teaching staff of 217 and a student body of 2,986. In addition, there were 20 Polish school institutions with 83 teachers and 1,227 children; there were also 4 afternoon courses, with

5 teachers and 51 students. Thus, the entire school system under the jurisdiction of the Central Committee included 57 institutions, with 305 teachers and 4,264 pupils. Most of these institutions, with the largest number of students, were to be found in the new Jewish communities of the recently-annexed German regions.

A few figures suffice to indicate the extent of the Jewish disaster in Poland. The Warsaw primary school has now (1948) an attendance of not more than 53 students, and a nursery school attendance of 36. Bialystok has a primary school with 10 children, but no nursery school. In Lublin, too, there is only one primary school with an attendance of 30 children.

The larger new communities, on the other hand, have schools with many more students: Stettin has 279, Dzierzonow 240, Walbrzych 200, Lignica 221, Wroclaw (Breslau) 339. Among the older Jewish communities, the largest number of children is to be found in the following cities: Cracow has 209 in primary schools, Lodz 309 in primary and 170 in nursery schools.

Since 1945 the Jewish school has not only increased its student body, but has also broadened its academic scope. There are today in Poland two schools (in Wroclaw and in Lodz) with a secondary school class (the ninth grade; the new structure of Polish state schools provides only for two-year high schools). In its report of March 1948, the Central Committee states: "Gradually the situation is becoming normalized, and we can already . . . point to important achievements, both with respect to the composition of our classes and the development of the children. The age levels of the pupils in our primary and secondary schools range from 6 to 17 years."

The legal status of the Jewish school is as yet unsettled. Until the present, no attempts have been made to settle this question by legislation. The Jewish school is still in the stage of organization and consolidation. Factually, however, the Jewish

schools enjoy equal rights with the state schools. The regulation of their legal status is not, therefore, a matter of great urgency. A considerable number of schools is actually subsidized by local authorities. One of the schools in Lodz has been taken over altogether by the city, which provides for it in its budget. With the exception of the schools in a few small towns, the Jewish schools usually occupy large and roomy buildings, well suited to their purpose.

In addition to the Yiddish-language schools, there are also a number of Hebrew schools. The problem of the Hebrew schools, too, was considered at the second conference of representatives of local Jewish Committees, but apparently no positive changes were then achieved in this respect, and thus there are in effect two isolated school systems in Poland for Jewish children. However, the schools of the Central Committee provide four hours of Hebrew instruction weekly, beginning with the fourth year.

Pedagogically, the restored Jewish school has faced various difficulties: almost entire teaching staffs had to be selected from among teachers who had worked, prior to the war, in Jewish-Polish schools. Of the former CYSHO teachers only a few have survived. There has also been a lack of textbooks and general books for children, as well as of reference books for teachers. It has been necessary, furthermore, to create new curricula for the schools.

These difficulties have gradually been surmounted. Curricula of studies in the Yiddish language and in Jewish history for the various grades have been prepared; a periodical reader, "Let us Study, Children," is being published. The work of the entire school system is conducted and supervised by the Educational Department of the Central Committee.

### III. OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

#### 1. LITHUANIA

The constitution of 1922 guaranteed rights of cultural autonomy to all national

minorities in Lithuania. But the victory of the Christian Democratic Party in 1924 brought a change of policy; the Jewish National Council was disbanded and the post of Minister for Jewish Affairs abolished. By 1926 Lithuania was a full-fledged dictatorship. Of all autonomous Jewish institutions only the school system survived, though for the schools, too, the new regime meant a period of bitter trials.

The Yiddish-secular school movement in Lithuania was launched in 1918. The progress made until 1934 is shown by the following table:

<i>Towns</i>	KINDERGARTENS		PRIMARY		SECONDARY	
	<i>Number of Schools</i>	<i>Number of Pupils</i>	<i>Number of Schools</i>	<i>Number of Pupils</i>	<i>Number of Schools</i>	<i>Number of Pupils</i>
Kaunas.....	2	69	3	600	1	300
Siaulia (Shavli).....	1	20	1	200	1	80
Vilkomir.....	1	15	1	120	—	—
Poneviej.....	—	—	1	120	1	40
Other small Towns.....	1	20	10	515	—	—
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1,555</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>420</b>

The primary schools as a rule had two- to three-year courses; there were three times as many girls as boys in these schools. One of the secondary schools, the commercial high school in Kaunas with 300 pupils, had a ten-year course. The other two high schools each had a three-year course. There were, furthermore, 15 evening schools with 1,200 students of school age, and 25 libraries attached to the various schools. The total number of children frequenting Yiddish-secular schools amounted to about 18 percent of all Jewish children of school age.

No summary of the Yiddish-secular school system in Lithuania would be complete without a mention of the Kinderhois (Children's House) in Kaunas. Founded in 1921, this institution enjoyed a remarkable growth throughout the years of its existence. It had been designed from the outset on scientific lines and rapidly developed as a kind of educational laboratory. The "Children's House" was, in fact, a self-

contained school community, governed by a spirit of happy mutual cooperation.

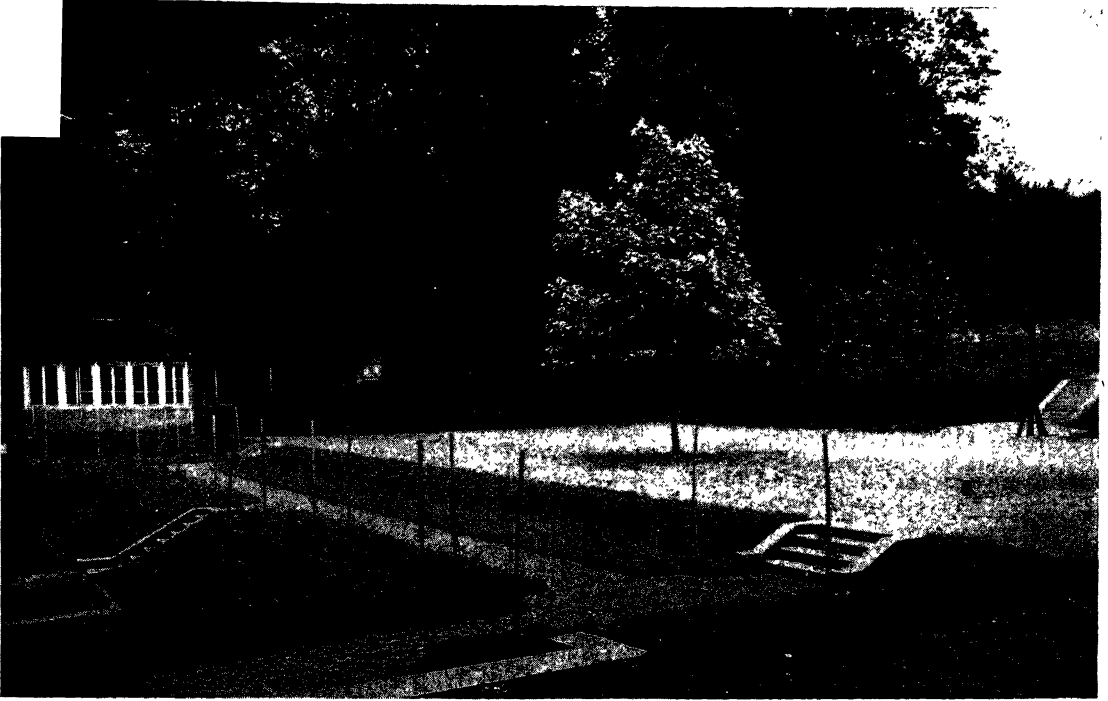
## 2. LATVIA

As early as May 1918 a Yiddishist group was active in Riga. But the project of a Yiddish-secular school could not be realized until after the withdrawal of the German occupying forces and the proclamation of the independent Latvian Republic (on November 18, 1918). By August 1919 Riga (the capital of the new republic) had three Yiddish-secular schools with a total attendance of 2,060 (60 percent of all Jewish

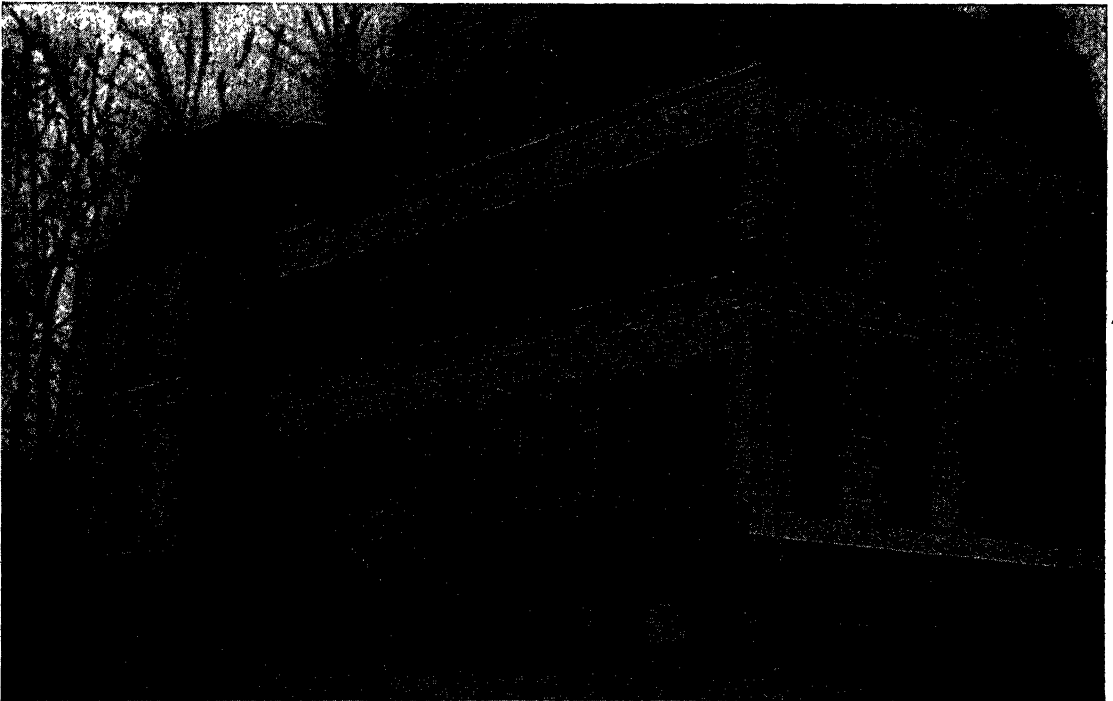
children of school age); in the fall of 1919, a Yiddish municipal high school was opened, which later achieved a considerable reputation.

New Yiddish schools sprang up also in Liepaja (Libau), Daugavpils (Duenaburg, Dvinsk), Varaklani, Rezekne (Ryehitsa) and Tukums.

A conspicuous part in the Latvian school movement was played by the "Yiddish Democratic Association of Teachers." In the summer of 1920 the Association opened a two-months training course for teachers. Similar courses were maintained until 1930, the period of tuition ranging from one to two years. (The number of teachers graduated was 150.) The first conference of the Teachers' Association convened in March 1921. It resolved to set up a Central Yiddish School Organization for Latvia, membership to be restricted to the teachers in the schools. This Latvian variant of CYSHO became the architect of Latvia's Yiddish school system. In April 1922 it



*Courtesy Jewish Labor Committee, New York*  
PLAYGROUND AND ATHLETIC FIELD OF THE NAOUM ARONSON CHILDREN'S  
HOUSE IN LES ANDELYS, FRANCE



*Courtesy Jewish Labor Committee, New York*  
THE VLADECK HOUSE AT BRUNOY, A YIDDISH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION  
NEAR PARIS, FRANCE

provided the stimulus for the founding of a parents' association. It maintained such educational institutions as did not receive state subsidies, and conducted a number of teachers' conferences to plan programs of instruction.

In 1934 the Yiddish schools in Latvia were attended by 6,000 children, 45 percent of all Jewish children of school age. All of these institutions were government-sponsored and provided with premises, libraries, textbooks, and so on. The schools, in which the language of instruction was Yiddish, may be listed and classified as follows:

Riga:— 6 primary schools; 1 supplementary school; 1 morning high school; 1 evening high school; 1 school for defective children. Total number of students: 2,150. In addition, there were 6 kindergartens with a total of 200 children.

Liepaja, Daugavpils, Rezekne, Ludza (Lucyn) and Kraslava had altogether seven primary schools and three high schools. Another eight smaller towns had one primary school each.

During 1927 and 1928 an educational monthly journal entitled *Naye Vegn* (New Paths) was published by the Latvian CYSHO, which also compiled a series of educational booklets: *Shulfragn* (School Problems), 1922; *Unzer Shul* (Our School), 1933; *Di Yidishe Shulbavegung in Letland* (The Yiddish School Movement in Latvia), 1926; *Di Yidish Veltleche Shul in Letland* (The Yiddish Secular School in Latvia), 1931.

In May 1934, a fascist revolution occurred in Latvia. Subsidies to Yiddish schools were drastically cut, and their number dropped from 122 in 1933 to 83 in 1935. Outstanding teachers were arrested. The Yiddish-secular schools were turned into hadarim where only a few non-religious subjects could be taught. Yiddish remained the language of instruction, but the teaching of the Yiddish language, of Yiddish literature and Jewish history was suppressed by law.

### 3. ESTONIA

Estonia, too, granted autonomy in school administration to its Jewish minority of 4,000. In 1933 the government officially recognized the autonomous rights of national minorities in educational and cultural affairs, a policy subsequently embodied in the law of 1926. By the time the Jewish *Kultur Rat* (Cultural Council) was formed, the Yiddish school organization in Tallinn (Reval), the capital of Estonia, had already established a Yiddish school and one kindergarten with about 30 children in each. First the Council adopted the view that Hebrew was the sole linguistic medium of Jewish autonomous culture, but after re-election the Council passed a resolution which accorded equal rights to Yiddish and Hebrew and voted to subsidize the existing Yiddishist institutions. Finally, a compromise was reached whereby the Yiddish school was to be regarded as a component, yet autonomous part of the general Jewish school system (where the language of instruction was Hebrew).

In 1934 the Yiddish school was attended by 80 pupils (six primary school grades and one junior high school grade). Other Yiddishist activities included a kindergarten and a day camp for the summer months. In 1939 the attendance at the Jewish schools amounted to 75 percent of the Jewish children of school age.

### 4. ROMANIA

When the Hapsburg empire collapsed in 1918, a Jewish national council, formed in Czernowitz, proclaimed Yiddish the national language of the Jewish people. During the following four years, eight Yiddish schools were founded in that city. Then, in 1922, Bucovina was occupied by Romanian forces and the Jewish national council was dissolved. The new authorities placed every conceivable obstacle in the way of the Yiddish schools, compelling them finally to introduce Romanian instead of Yiddish as the language of instruction. The sole surviving remnants of Yiddish

education were the institutions of the "Jewish Workers' Education Society" *Morgnroit* (*Dawn*) which had opened homes and kindergartens for children. Here the language of instruction remained Yiddish. In 1924 the *Morgnroit* schools were installed in a separate building which already housed the Society's vocational day schools for tailors and carpenters. Repeated attempts by the society to legalize a Yiddish primary school remained unsuccessful.

Very different was the fate of the Yiddish school in Bessarabia where, during the early years of occupation, the Romanian authorities pursued a policy diametrically opposed to that of their Bucovinian colleagues. In Bessarabia the Romanian authorities found a highly developed network of schools conducted in the Yiddish language and founded as early as 1917. In 1921 a cultural conference, convened for the first time in Romania, established a "Culture Federation." At a subsequent conference of this Federation, it was revealed that there were 62 Yiddish primary schools in Bessarabia; of these, 38 were maintained by the government, and the remaining 24 by the Jew-

ish communities. The total attendance was 5,757 children. Six government schools and 5 community schools with 2,230 children were maintained in Kishinev (Chisinau) alone. It was in Kishinev, too, that the government opened a seminary for Yiddish teachers. Meanwhile, the eight Yiddish schools in Bucovina remained without government support and were forced to rely on contributions from the Jewish Socialist parties. It was accordingly resolved to set up a central school committee to coordinate the Yiddish secular system throughout the country.

From 1921 on, however, the government's policy aimed at the "Romanization" of the Yiddish schools. In December 1925, a government decree stipulated either Romanian or Hebrew as the language of instruction in Jewish schools. Teachers not in possession of Romanian citizenship were discharged. These and similar measures soon led to the complete collapse of the Yiddish school system. For a long time Yiddish continued to be taught illegally in Bessarabian schools, but the increasing rigor of bureaucratic control gradually wiped out the last vestiges of resistance.

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# YIDDISH SECULAR SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES

S. Yefroikin

1. The Pioneering Period
2. Consolidation and Development since 1918

## 1. THE PIONEERING PERIOD

During the last fifty years Jewish education in the United States, in common with Jewish cultural trends in other countries, has experienced a significant evolution. The new socio-political and ideological currents, the rise of a Jewish labor movement and the emergence of a modern Jewish secular culture, had a marked influence on Jewish life in general, and on Jewish education in particular. One of the newer manifestations in the sphere of Jewish education was the Yiddish secular school which made its appearance shortly before World War I, and which owed its inception principally to the Jewish socialist movement and the Jewish labor organizations.

For a considerable period the Jewish labor movement in America showed little interest in general Jewish problems (See *The Jewish Labor Movement in the United States*, in this volume). This situation changed radically after 1905-1906, when the new wave of Jewish immigration brought to America's shores a considerable number of Jewish workers and intellectuals who had taken an active part in the Jewish socialist and cultural movements in Tsarist Russia.

In Russia the Jewish socialist movement had already, at the turn of the century, abandoned its earlier cosmopolitan and negative attitude toward the problem of Jewish survival. Each of the Jewish socialist groups now advanced its own program as a solution. The Poale Zionists and the

Socialist-Territorialists saw in the establishment of a homeland the ideal answer to the Jewish problem. The *Bund* held fast to the idea of Jewish cultural autonomy within the framework of a democratic socialist state. Thus the new wave of Jewish arrivals from Russia brought with it a new approach to the problem of Jewish survival as well as to the question of Jewish education. The socialist groups, however, placed the emphasis on the secular and purely national factors in Jewish life. In this manner they became pioneers in the Jewish secular school movement in America.

An appreciable period of time elapsed before the transition was made from theory to action. At the convention of the Poale Zion in Montreal in October 1910, a resolution was adopted laying the basis of a system of National-Radical Yiddish schools. Six weeks later the first such school was opened in New York. It set itself a two-fold task: first, a national—the Jewish child for the Jewish people; and second, a socialistic—to prepare the younger generation for the struggle for socialism.

In time, ever wider socialist and labor circles were drawn into the school movement. At the 1911 conference of the Jewish National Workers' Alliance (a fraternal order intimately connected with the Poale Zionist movement) a resolution was adopted to establish an educational committee for organizing and maintaining Yiddish national-radical schools. In addition to the Poale Zionists, the Socialist-Territorialist groups, too, played a very important role in the pioneering period of the Yiddish secular schools. The movement was also actively supported by a number of non-partisan Yiddishists.

As a consequence, differences developed in regard to the character of the schools and their program, especially in relation to the study of Hebrew and the part that Jewish tradition should play in the education of the younger generation.

In 1913 one school in the Bronx seceded from the National-Radical school system when differences developed regarding the extent to which Hebrew was to be included in the study courses. After the death of Sholem Aleichem, the noted Yiddish writer, this Bronx school adopted the name "Sholem Aleichem School." Within a short time three additional schools with the same orientation were opened in New York. In 1918 this group of schools formed a common organization under the name of Sholem Aleichem Folks Institute.

In 1915 a Yiddish Socialist school was opened in Harlem, New York, under the auspices of members of the Jewish Socialist Federation (See The Jewish Labor Movement in the United States). A similar school was established in 1917 in Chicago. Some branches of the Workmen's Circle, too, participated in the sponsorship of various Yiddish schools. In 1916, at the Workmen's Circle's sixteenth conference a resolution was adopted to "request all branches to give their support to the Socialist Yiddish schools." Actually, however, the Workmen's Circle applied itself to the establishment of such schools only after a further resolution had been adopted at its convention in 1918, declaring such support of school activities as the duty of the organization as a whole and not merely of the individual branches. At this convention a special budget was allocated for the support of the schools and a tax for this purpose was imposed on all members of the organization.

## 2. CONSOLIDATION AND DEVELOPMENT SINCE 1918

By 1918 three distinct and recognizable tendencies had crystallized in the Yiddish school movement: the schools of the Jewish

National Workers' Alliance, which changed their name from "National-Radical" to "Jewish Folk School"; the Sholem Aleichem Schools and the Workmen's Circle Schools.

The aim of all three groups in the schools under their influence was to foster both socialist and Jewish ideals. The driving force, however, was the Jewish national motive. At that time the Yiddish secular schools placed greater emphasis on this factor than did other Jewish schools. In addition, the Yiddish schools stressed the need for educating the children in Yiddish, the language of the parents, so as to counteract the growing estrangement between the older and younger generations linguistically and ideologically, and thereby prevent the division of the Jewish family into two groups without a common language and common outlook.

In the schools of the Jewish National Workers' Alliance special attention was devoted to the study of Hebrew. In the schools of the Workmen's Circle and in the Sholem Aleichem schools, emphasis was placed on "education and achievements relating to Jewish secular life and activity: Yiddish language and literature, Jewish folk creativity, Jewish history"; and further on the need "to acquaint our children with the treasures of Jewish culture and literature, new and old, in order to assure the continuity of Jewish cultural life."

The internal ideological struggles within Jewish labor organizations, between "right" and "left", gradually extended to the schools which, by this time, had become important cultural communal centers for adults as well. In 1926 the majority of the Workmen's Circle schools in New York and Philadelphia broke away and founded the "Non-partisan Workers Schools." Later, following the split within the Workmen's Circle itself, when the "left" groups established the International Workers Order (I.W.O.), the "non-partisan" schools joined the latter body.

Beginning with 1927, the schools of the

Workmen's Circle placed increasing emphasis on the Jewish elements in the school program. Although the socialist orientation remained, the national tendencies in all the Yiddish schools became more pronounced. "The Jewish child for the Jewish people" became the official motto of the

educational and national value of the traditional Jewish holidays.

This evolution was characteristic of the Yiddish school movement as a whole; in the case of the Sholem Aleichem and National Workers' Alliance Schools these Jewish-national tendencies were, to a cer-

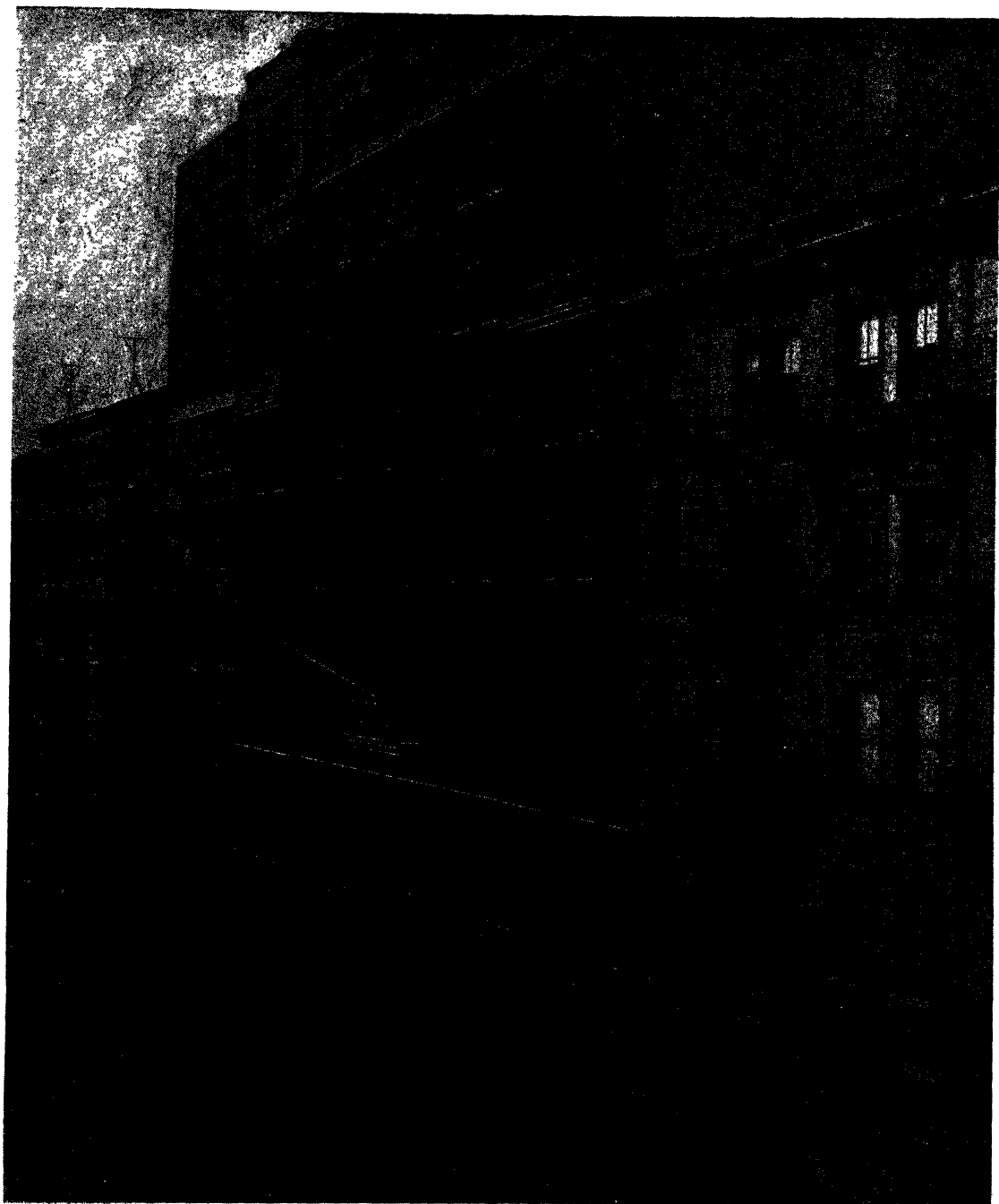


CLASS IN WORKMEN'S CIRCLE HIGH SCHOOL IN NEW YORK CITY

Workmen's Circle schools. This program was pursued persistently with unrelaxing efforts to intensify the Jewish-national components in the curricula. At the fifteenth school conference, in May 1948, it was officially stated that the Workmen's Circle schools were to be Jewish-national in character, with the aim of imparting a Jewish education, and imbuing the pupils with the ideal of a world of equality and justice, in which the Jewish people would find a free and equal place. Further, the Jewish child was to be introduced to Jewish literature in all its phases, from the Bible to the works of modern times. Finally, the conference voiced full recognition of the

tain extent, even more pronounced.

The schools of the International Workers Order which in general follow an ideological pattern of their own, have also become more national-Jewish in recent years. Their fifth conference, held in 1936, saw significant changes in the work and program of the I.W.O. schools. At this conference it was declared that "the past of the Jewish people is intimately bound up with our present interests; the history of the Jewish masses is our history. . . . We must acquaint the Jewish child with his people's past, bringing to light every positive and significant element in Jewish history, and hand them over to the child as his historical inheritance."



CULTURAL CENTER OF THE WORKMEN'S CIRCLE IN NEW YORK

There was striking progress towards similarity of outlook among the three pioneer Yiddish school groupings—the schools of the Jewish National Workers' Alliance; the Sholem Aleichem schools; and the Workmen's Circle schools. The

cultural value of Hebrew was recognized, though it is true not with equal emphasis, in all the schools. In this respect the schools of the Jewish National Workers' Alliance went further than the others; in the Alliance schools the cultural-historical



*Courtesy Workmen's Circle, New York*

#### WORKMEN'S CIRCLE KINDERGARTEN IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN

and national role of the Jewish religious tradition was also more intensively emphasized. In the Sholem Aleichem schools and those of the Workmen's Circle Hebrew is taught in the higher elementary grades and in the high schools. All three groups of schools likewise share a positive attitude to the struggle of the Yishuv in Palestine; however, this issue, too, is more strongly stressed in the schools of the National Workers' Alliance, which is closely connected with the political Poale Zionist movement, than in the Sholem Aleichem and Workmen's Circle schools. In spite of these differences, however, the unifying features among the three school systems have become ever stronger.

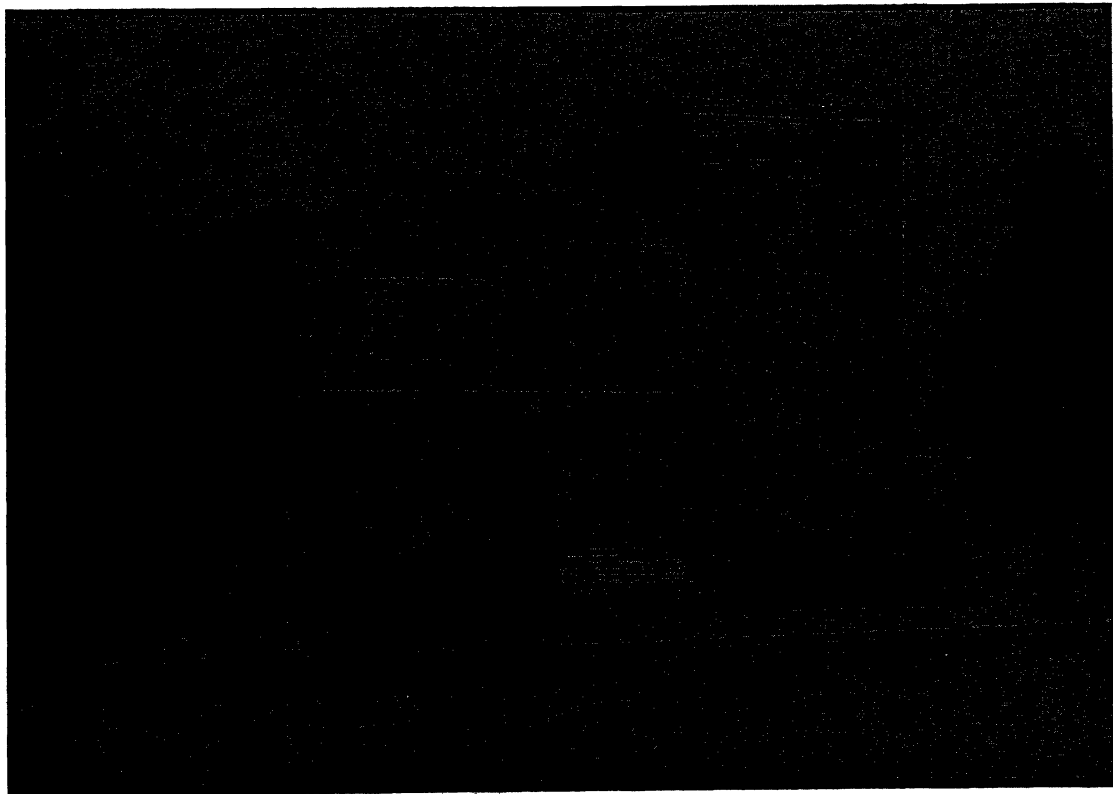
An additional change has manifested itself within the Yiddish secular school movement during recent years. The view that a Jewish national life could be possible without observance of a Jewish pattern has been found erroneous; it has come

to be recognized that to be a Jew it is necessary to live a Jewish life.

The fact that approximately 80 per cent of the pupils in the Yiddish schools are third generation Americans accounts for the more intense awareness of American ties and ideals. Since most of the pupils come to the Yiddish schools with scanty knowledge of Yiddish (many with no knowledge of this language at all), and since, moreover, the curriculum has in the course of time been extended, the school administrations have had to consider lengthening the school hours. There is also a growing tendency towards establishing larger central schools and providing the schools with their own buildings. In the school year 1947-1948 the Jewish National Workers' Alliance made the experiment of an all-day school, under the name of Kinnereth, after the pattern of similar schools in Canada. This school is the first Yiddish-Hebrew all-day school in New York.



KINNERETH, JEWISH NATIONAL DAY SCHOOL IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK



DAY SCHOOL OF THE SHOLEM ALEICHEM FOLKS INSTITUTE IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

The Yiddish secular school movement is widely ramified. It has kindergartens, elementary schools and high schools, as well as two teachers' seminaries. The older of these is the seminary of the Jewish National Workers' Alliance, opened in 1918. The teacher-training courses of the Workmen's Circle were inaugurated a year later, in 1919. The Workmen's Circle courses closed in 1932, but were resumed in 1935, under the designation of "Higher Courses". The secular schools operate various summer camps, which also engage in important educational activities. The first of these, opened in 1922, was Camp Boiberik in New York State, under the auspices of the Sholem Aleichem Folks Institute. The Workmen's Circle maintains camps in the vicinity of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles and Toronto. The Jewish National Workers' Alliance operates such camps in the vicinity of New York and Detroit. The International Workers Order has a camp in the vicinity of New York.

Three children's magazines are published: *Kinder Journal*, issued by the Sholem Aleichem Folks Institute; *Kinder Tsaitung*, issued by the Workmen's Circle; and *Yungvarg*, issued by the International Workers Order.

All three school systems have publishing divisions for textbooks and other school materials. The oldest of these is the publishing firm Matones, founded in 1925 by the Sholem Aleichem Folks Institute. The largest is Kinder Ring, maintained by the Workmen's Circle. This organization has issued the largest number of textbooks; they are used also in the schools of the Jewish National Workers' Alliance and the Sholem Aleichem schools.

In 1946 the Workmen's Circle maintained 127 educational institutions, with an enrollment of approximately 8,000 pupils. The Jewish National Workers' Alliance maintained 71 educational institutions, with an enrollment of 5,000 pupils. The Sholem Aleichem Folks Institute had 19 educational institutions, with an enrollment of 1,100. In 1947 the International Workers Order maintained 94 schools with an enrollment of 6,000. Total figures show that approximately 20,000 children attended the schools of all four organizations.

In the course of nearly four decades the Yiddish secular schools have developed into a significant factor in Jewish educational and cultural life and have substantially contributed to the moulding of a new generation of American Jews.

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# JEWISH EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Leo L. Honor

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- II. THE PERIOD OF EAST EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION
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## I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The American Jewish community is composed of heterogeneous immigrant elements from different parts of the world. But whatever their country of origin, all Jews who settled in the United States were bearers of a common educational tradition. For countless generations Jews everywhere carefully nurtured the idea of instructing the young to live in accordance with the precepts of the Torah. However, because Jewish experience was so varied, this tradition took on forms differing in mode, scope and intensity. Accordingly, each immigrant element coming to the United States gave its own specific interpretation of the common educational ideal.

The Spanish-Portuguese Jews, dominant during the early period of American Jewish history, had combined an interest in secular studies with training in rigorous observance

of Jewish law, decades before the Jews of Germany ventured to introduce secular studies into the Jewish school curriculum. The early German Jewish immigrants, mostly country dwellers, brought with them an intense Jewish loyalty, but a somewhat limited educational outlook. The contrast between these first German Jewish immigrants and the arrivals of two decades later from Germany was very marked; hailing from the metropolitan centers, the latter were heirs to a new educational experience with a corresponding change in orientation and educational ideals. Finally, the Jewish masses who came from Eastern Europe between 1881 and World War I brought over the ideals of their traditional education as well as newer conceptions, reflecting developments in Eastern Europe during the half-century prior to World War I. American Jewish education is thus the story of the impact of the American environment upon these varied interpretations of the age-old aim of preparing the young to live as Jews, as well as of the interplay of these ideals themselves.

The pattern of Jewish education during the Colonial period and the early period of the American Republic was determined by several characteristic features.

A number of years would pass between the time of Jewish settlement in a particular place and the establishment of the local synagogue. During the interval, Jewish education would of necessity be confined to the home unless the community was fortunate enough to have in its midst individuals equipped to serve as private teachers. Frequently, one of the deciding motives



in building a synagogue was the concern for the children's education. The special concern of the synagogue trustees that the children of the poor might enjoy equal educational opportunities with the children of parents able to defray the cost of instruction may be regarded as an expression of community responsibility for a communal program of education. Education was largely limited to boys; however, after the 1790's small numbers of girls were also enrolled in congregational schools as, for instance, in the Shearith Israel Congregation in New York City.

In the main, the curriculum of the Sephardic school consisted of instruction in the Hebrew services, chants for the reading of the Torah and haftarah (chapters of the Prophets), the three R's and the Spanish language. The combination of secular and Jewish studies is noteworthy. In American Sephardic communities religious education remained the main motive, in contrast to the way Jewish studies were minimized in the earlier stage of the new Jewish education in Germany. Spanish was usually dropped from the curriculum when the community had sufficiently adjusted itself to its English-speaking environment.

The teacher was usually the hazan or minister. When the number of pupils became too large or the duties of the hazan too burdensome, special teachers were engaged, who were called upon at times for additional duties. As was the custom of the time, the teachers were paid in money or in kind. The total income of teachers was low, but comparatively the status of the earlier Jewish teacher appears to have been superior to that of his modern counterpart in the United States.

During the early decades of the nineteenth century, a number of private Jewish boarding schools were established to attract the children of the wealthier Jews. The registration in the congregational schools dwindled, and there was a tendency to convert them into supplementary schools. Besides, there were many Jews scattered

through the country in groups too small for a common effort to educate the young. Education in such places was confined to private and home instruction.

A recurring theme in the minutes of the New York congregation Shearith Israel consists of complaints of the school's shortcomings. It would appear that Jewish educational goals, low as they were, were yet rarely reached; that many of the pupils neither knew the meaning of the prayers nor grasped the religious fundamentals. There is evidence, however, that young men in New York and Philadelphia were able to conduct services and that young boys could chant the haftarah, and that it was a regular custom for a Bar-Mitzvah boy to chant a section of the weekly Torah portion. Moreover, the school was not unsuccessful from the standpoint of the ultimate aim of all educational programs—it was instrumental in rearing Jews of integrity and high ideals.

The pattern changed considerably during the second quarter of the nineteenth century with the influx of a large number of German Jews during the period of reaction following the defeat of Napoleon. Upon arrival in this country, these newcomers established synagogues reflecting their own experience and background. It was in America that the new immigrants, in the main village-bred, made their first contact with secular education. Zealous in their religious observance, they were profoundly shocked by the laxity they encountered in the New World among the native-born Sephardim and Ashkenazim alike. In consequence, they were extremely dissatisfied with the educational programs which, in their view, had failed to prevent such laxity.

On the whole, it may be said that in both the older communities and the newer ones, to the east and west of the Alleghenies, where a large portion of the German Jews settled, Jewish education during the first half of the nineteenth century was very limited. Jewish parents evinced far greater

readiness than formerly to send their children to private schools for their secular education, despite the Christian influences prevailing there. Religious education was provided in the home, partly by private teachers, or in supplementary schools conducted by congregations, where instruction was given in Hebrew prayers and the elements of Jewish practice. In the smaller communities the private teacher or melamed, who was brought in by the wealthier families, performed a very important function. In addition to teaching he also served as a religious functionary, performing certain duties essential to Jewish observance and practice. In order to make a living he had to engage in peddling or other occupations. Among these melamdim there were individuals of solid Jewish background who exerted a very wholesome influence, but there were others whose knowledge of Jewish matters was very meager. As each group of immigrants adjusted itself to the new environment, it became reconciled to the limited Jewish educational opportunities available to their children. But the later immigrants refused to accept the situation as inevitable and raised their voices in protest.

In the late forties of the nineteenth century dissatisfaction with the state of Jewish education became acute. Strong criticism of the poor manner in which Judaism was being imparted was voiced in every Jewish community. Three men in particular exerted a powerful influence in raising the standards of Jewish education during the period preceding and immediately following the Civil War: Rev. Isaac Leeser (1806-1868), Dr. David Lillienthal (1815-1882), and the Rev. Bernhard Felsenthal (1822-1908).

The degree of neglect of Jewish education at this time may be gauged from the fact that Leeser, whose chief interest was in the higher forms of Jewish education, helped foster the organization of a one-day-a-week school and regarded its establishment as an extremely significant achieve-

ment. In 1838 Rebecca Gratz (1781-1869), an ardent, observant Jewess, deeply influenced by Leeser, induced the directors of a philanthropic organization to establish a Sunday-school for "free instruction in Jewish history and related subjects to the Jewish children of Philadelphia." This was the first Jewish Sunday-school in the United States. By coincidence, during that very same year, another woman from similar motives established a Sunday-school in her own community in Charleston, S. C.

The first Sunday-school was a pioneering venture in more than one sense. Neither textbooks nor curriculum precedents were available. Rebecca Gratz, the founder of the school and its first superintendent, had to prepare weekly lessons and to instruct and guide the volunteer teachers. In this effort she was aided by Leeser who prepared a catechism and other text materials.

When the congregations began to make provisions for the religious education of the children of their members, the function of the newly-founded Hebrew Sunday School Society became more markedly philanthropic. Greater stress was laid upon combating missionary activity among the children of recent immigrants. More than a century after its foundation (1847), the Society interpreted its function as being to reach that part of the Jewish child population which would otherwise receive no Jewish education, either because the parents could not afford to avail themselves of existing facilities or because there were none such in a particular neighborhood.

While the communal Sunday school idea spread rapidly (Richmond 1839, New York 1845), it was not regarded as the solution to the problem of giving Jewish children an adequate Jewish education. Nor was the congregational supplementary school which had been established in many communities regarded as a satisfactory solution. The solution was sought in all-day schools or in private Jewish boarding schools where children would be taught prayers and Torah in the Hebrew original, as well as the

common secular subjects. Before the development of the public school system, it was natural for congregations to assume responsibility for secular as well as religious education, with the emphasis on the latter. Even after public schools began to replace denominational schools in the United States, many of the immigrant Jews preferred to combine secular with Jewish studies in their own institutions. With the emergence of non-sectarian public schools, and with the change of attitude towards the Hebrew language under the influence of Reform ideas, it was considered adequate to limit lessons in religious education to Saturday and Sunday mornings, or even Sunday mornings only; consequently, the all-day schools were given up. The time when such schools flourished varied in different communities, depending upon when the German Jews settled in those places and public schools were first established there. In New York, they came into existence in the forties (the earliest were established by Bnai Jeshurun, Anshe Chesed and Temple Emanu-El congregations) and were discontinued in the fifties. In Cincinnati, they prospered in the fifties (two schools, one under the supervision of Isaac M. Wise and the other under that of Dr. Lillienthal, developed into schools of an exceptionally high type); they suffered a decline and were eventually closed in the sixties. In Chicago, they were established in the fifties and sixties and closed down in the sixties and seventies.

Significant experiments with the all-day schools, congregational as well as private, were made by the German educator, Dr. David Lillienthal, who came to this country in 1844 after a distinguished career as an educational pioneer in Russia. Dr. Lillienthal's educational experiments extended to curriculum, method, school organization and school discipline.

In some communities, such as Chicago, there was a determined struggle to maintain the day schools, due probably to the influence of Bernhard Felsenthal, noted

secretary of the "Reformverein" and champion in Reform circles of Hebraic education. His influence was reflected in the constitution of the Sinai Congregation, the first Reform Congregation of Chicago, which declared it a major responsibility to sustain a school for a "thorough instruction in religion, in Hebrew, and in the branches connected therewith." This attitude was shared by all the congregations which were established in the sixties. Despite Felsenthal, however, a marked change of attitude came over the community in the late sixties and seventies. There was a general tendency to replace the day school based on the parochial idea by a Saturday and Sunday morning school giving instruction only in religion and Biblical history. There was a short-lived attempt to include some Hebrew in the curriculum even though the time devoted to instruction was so limited. In some congregations, the Saturday morning session was dropped and religious education confined to Sunday mornings, but on the whole, this was a considerably later development. In 1882, out of 91 schools affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 81 still held sessions on both Saturday and Sunday mornings.

When the new schools first came into existence, they were greeted with enthusiasm, because they seemed to conform to the pattern established by the majority element of the American population. In time, however, there were growing expressions of dissatisfaction with the meager achievements of these schools, due mainly to the totally inadequate training of the teaching personnel and lack of textbook material. This dissatisfaction led to the establishment of the Hebrew Sabbath School Union (1886). The aims of the Union were to gather information about Sabbath and Sunday schools in America, to advance common methods and discipline in these schools, to work out an all-embracing course of study, to help in the training of teachers, and to prepare suitable textbook material.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, schools frequently referred to as "mission" schools were organized in the poorer neighborhoods by the sisterhoods of wealthier congregations. The Jewish Education Association of Chicago succeeded in establishing Sabbath schools in those parts of the city where heretofore religious education had been neglected. In New York City, the "mission" schools reached a high degree of development through the work of the Hebrew Free School Association, organized in 1864 by the joint efforts of the city's congregations to counteract the activities of Christian missionaries. The first school opened by this Association was parochial in character; those established later were of the supplementary afternoon-school type. Owing to the change in sentiment in the seventies, the Association's parochial school, too, was transformed into an afternoon school. The Association, which succeeded in reaching large numbers, emphasized the religious education of girls as well as boys. It also offered courses of an advanced character, such as instruction in Hebrew grammar and in the Pentateuch with Rashi's commentary. For a number of years, it conducted a normal school for girls known as the Ladies' Hebrew Seminary. However, in most "mission" schools the programs were not as ambitious as in the schools of the Hebrew Free School Association. They were sometimes confined to Sabbath assemblies on Saturday afternoons, or else they functioned as Sabbath and Sunday schools somewhat parallel in scope to congregational schools of this character. The efforts of sisterhoods to supply religious education in neglected areas were subsequently continued by the Council of Jewish Women.

Jewish educational efforts throughout the country during the nineteenth century were confined in the main to elementary education. There were some sporadic attempts to provide opportunities for advanced study, but on the whole, secondary education was non-existent. Rabbis sometimes tutored advanced students in Bible

exegesis, Rabbinical literature and Hebrew grammar, either individually or in small groups.

The idea of a Jewish College was first advanced by Mordecai Noah of New York in 1840. The plan was warmly endorsed by Leeseer and other prominent American Jewish leaders, but American Jewry was not won over to the idea at that time. The first successful attempt to establish an institution of higher Jewish learning was made in 1867 when, thanks to Leeseer's perseverance, the Maimonides College was opened in Philadelphia. Leeseer was not destined to see his dream take full shape. He died less than half a year after the founding of the college. His death was a serious setback to the project. In 1873, after a six-year period of existence, the college was closed. However, as a result of the rapid increase of Jewish population in the United States after 1848, the new congregations established in the old and new Jewish settlements called for additional spiritual leaders, rabbis and teachers. An indefatigable worker for the establishment of a college for the training of American rabbis was Rev. Isaac M. Wise (1819-1900). An earlier failure, in 1855, had convinced him that such a college could be established and maintained only with the combined support of all the congregations. In 1873 he succeeded in organizing the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and two years later, in 1875, in establishing the Hebrew Union College.

At first it had been hoped that the Union would become all-embracing and that the college would serve all elements of the American Jewish population. After the Reform rabbis had adopted the so-called Pittsburgh platform in 1885, that prospect dissipated. The conservative elements of the community began to stress the need of founding a similar institution through which "the beliefs and tenets of traditional Judaism might be disseminated." In 1886, through the initiative of Dr. Sabato Morais of Philadelphia, a Jewish Theological Seminary Association was organized.

Upon the death in 1897 of Dr. Morais, the moving spirit of the entire enterprise, the Seminary Association, found itself in straits. The Seminary Association was reorganized in 1902 under a new charter as the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and Prof. Solomon Schechter (1847-1915) was called to its presidency. Together, the Hebrew Union College and the Jewish Theological Seminary have graduated over 700 rabbis, among them many who have exercised a profound influence on the development of American Jewish life and institutions.

The story of Jewish education necessarily centers on Jewish schools, but it must be borne in mind that at no time was the school the sole agent for disseminating Jewish educational influence. The type of influence which emanated from the Jewish home was always a significant factor. Memoirs of the children of the first generation of Reform Jews indicate that they were imbued by their parents with a strong love of Jewish values and ideals. Powerful educational influences during the third quarter of the nineteenth century were also exercised by the pulpit and the Anglo-Jewish press. To these must be added the influence of the Jewish book. In the forties and the seventies there were two abortive efforts to establish organizations for the publication of Judaica in English. Finally, in 1888, the Jewish Publication Society of America was founded. This society has published over 250 books covering almost the entire range of Jewish interests. These books have been a potent factor in the education of American Jews.

To complete the picture, perhaps a word should be said about informal educational activities. During the forties and fifties Jewish literary societies developed in almost every community with a sizable number of Jews, but their interest in Jewish themes was slight. During the sixties and seventies, there developed a new type of organization, The Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA). In the emphasis they placed on libraries, lectures, dramatics and other

cultural and intellectual activities, these organizations were very similar to their forerunners, the literary societies. They were, however, motivated and characterized by a positive attitude toward Jewish values. Among their aims they included the "fostering of better knowledge of the history, literature, and doctrine of Judaism." Encouraged by the rabbis of the various communities, the YMHA's organized lectures on Jewish themes, and frequently also conducted regular classes for young men and women in Jewish history and the Hebrew language. Their libraries were often the only source of supply of Jewish reading matter.

## II. THE PERIOD OF EAST EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION

About the time American Jewry was becoming stabilized, a new wave of Jewish immigration set in, which reached unprecedented proportions. The Jewish population of the United States had grown from approximately 50,000 in 1848 to 250,000 in 1880; during the following thirty years it increased to approximately 2,000,000. The new immigration, driven chiefly from East European countries by political persecution and economic repression, was largely a migration of families. The heads of the families were in the main artisans, small merchants, men of scant vocational training and small means. They came from small towns in economically backward countries, but settled for the most part in the larger metropolitan centers. The transition from a backward civilization to one far more highly developed brought its difficulties.

The older Jewish community made strenuous efforts to assist the newer settlers both materially and spiritually. The spiritual assistance was in the nature of "Americanization" efforts and consisted in organizing special classes in English and civics, in settlement work and expansion of the "mission" schools described above, or in sponsoring similar education programs. Unfortunately, "Americanization" as it was

understood in the eighties implied rapid abandonment of Old World mores. As applied to the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, this meant weaning them away from their vernacular, the Yiddish language. (In some of the Jewish settlement houses, for example, the use of Yiddish was prohibited.) To some degree even the teaching of Hebrew was discouraged and emphasis placed upon the more specifically religious aspects of Judaism. This attitude was strongly resented by the newcomers. They tended to disregard the well-intentioned efforts of their benefactors and to depend more and more upon their own resources for the solution of their problems. The rise of juvenile delinquency was attributed in many quarters to the estrangement between parents and children resulting from too rapid Americanization of the new generation. Consequently, the philosophy of Americanization was modified to include recognition of the need for preserving old values during the transition to the new. It was only at a much later date that a new philosophy of Americanization evolved, according to which immigrant adjustment to the new environment did not require the immigrant to abandon the culture in which he was rooted. Instead, he was encouraged to strengthen these roots as a means of contributing to American civilization in terms of his historic heritage.

The first phase of this large-scale migration of population was largely a movement of the common people; the few intellectuals among them soon reached positions of leadership, one group pulling towards rigid adherence to the orthodox tradition and the other, at a later stage, towards radical cosmopolitanism. These immigrants came from countries where the ideal of Torah had been intensively cultivated, and the children were reared in the spirit of the classics of Jewish religious literature. Although there was no compulsory education law, the pressure of public opinion was so strong that the education of the male children may be said to have been universal.

Upon arrival in the United States, the East European Jews greeted the American public school as a symbol of freedom, and immediately enrolled their children. However, under the stress of the new economic and social conditions, the parents were led to neglect the Jewish education of their children. As a result, poorly qualified private *melamdim* stepped into the breach and began to supply Jewish education or a travesty of it.

These *melamdim* made a practice of going from house to house, dispensing Jewish knowledge limited to the mechanical reading of prayers and the chanting of the *haftarah* as a preparation for Bar-Mitzvah. Others established private afternoon and evening schools which they called the *heder*, a familiar name that evoked a response among the newer immigrants despite the different reality behind it. The *hadarim* sprang up in the immigrant sections of all cities where East European Jews settled in large numbers. The new milieu was not what the old had been, and there was no pressure of public opinion to maintain proper standards. Parents caught in the toils of the sweatshop had neither time nor interest to watch the educational programs of their children. Of necessity, the time of instruction in supplementary schools could only be a fraction of what it had been in the full-time *heder*. This, in turn, implied a deterioration in quality. What was more serious, however, was that *hadarim* were opened by men without proper qualifications.

The *hadarim* were often set up over saloons, dance-halls and in basements. The unsanitary, uninviting physical surroundings, the unpleasant associations which pupils connected with Jewish schooling, the identification of Jewish study with a mechanical repetition of meaningless words and phrases by rote did much to alienate the products of these *hadarim* from Jewish life. There were, of course, *melamdim* of a higher type, qualified individuals who struggled valiantly to maintain the old ideal of Torah. Although there were only

a few of these in each community, they may be regarded as pioneers in the development of an intensive Jewish education in America.

Brought up on the idea that the teaching of Torah is a sacred obligation, newer immigrants, on developing their philanthropies, early provided facilities for the religious education of the children of the poor. It was also natural that the traditional name, Talmud Torah (Torah study), should have been chosen for the educational institution set up for this purpose. The Talmud Torah, too, underwent a transformation when it was transplanted to this country, but in this instance for the better. Strictly speaking it is not correct to say that the East European Talmud Torah first came into existence in the eighties. In New York a Talmud Torah was established by Russian Jews as early as 1862. This school continued despite great difficulties until 1879 and was reorganized in 1883 as the Machzikei Talmud Torah, first of the Talmud Torahs of the period under discussion. In Chicago, the first two Russian Jewish congregations set up Talmud Torahs at an early date, one in the sixties and the other in the seventies. They differed from those of the later period in that they were conducted under congregational auspices whereas the Talmud Torahs of the eighties and nineties were all communal institutions.

Because Talmud Torahs were established by communally-minded groups, there was greater responsibility in their management than in the case of the hadarim. Moreover, with larger numbers of pupils involved, the Talmud Torahs offered the possibility of some form of school organization, classification and gradation. The chief handicaps under which this institution labored was the natural reluctance of the more self-respecting elements to enroll their own children because of the odium attached to the Talmud Torah in its "old-home" setting as the school of the poor. Thus the very people who did most for the development of the Talmud Torah thought it

necessary to find some other solution for the Jewish education of their own children. The stigma of a charity institution was stressed by the fact that the pupils of the Talmud Torahs were frequently supplied with shoes, clothing, and other necessities. The Talmud Torah also suffered from inadequate finances, its income being derived from low membership dues collected in quarterly installments, charity boxes, and similar sources. It could not afford to pay a living wage to its teachers who were compelled to supplement their income by additional work. The quarters in which the schools were housed and the school equipment, while perhaps superior to those of the private hadarim, were still extremely inadequate. Before the end of this period, some of the schools were moved into buildings better suited for school purposes and they were improved in other respects. The curriculum of the typical Talmud Torah corresponded roughly with that of the East European elementary heder and consisted of: Ivri (mechanical reading of the siddur); Pentateuch—rote translation into Yiddish, word by word; and the commentary of Rashi.

There were some among the new immigrants who sought to retain the higher standard of Jewish education, which centered on the teaching of Talmud. Since the supplementary school did not allow sufficient time for this purpose, they established all-day schools where the greater part of the day was devoted to Jewish study and a few hours, sufficient to meet the minimum requirements of the State, were given over to secular studies. This new institution was called a yeshivah, although it had little similarity to the yeshivah of Eastern Europe. An effort was made to extend the time schedule of some afternoon schools to three or four hours daily, in order to enable pupils to reach the study of Talmud. These afternoon schools, because of their curriculum of advanced studies, were also designated as yeshivot.

The first yeshivah (Yeshivah Etz Chaim) was organized in New York in 1886. It

started with a small group of boys, nine or ten years old, who, before coming to this country, had had considerable preliminary preparation. The organizers, a group of learned, extremely orthodox Jews, wrote into the by-laws that only observant Jews should serve as directors or teachers. In 1915 it was combined with another yeshivah established in 1897 for older boys whose preliminary preparation was sufficient for advanced Talmudic studies. Out of this merger developed the Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, an institution of higher Jewish learning for the training of Orthodox rabbis; with this institution the Yeshivah University of the present day is integrally connected. A parallel development in Chicago gave rise to the Hebrew Theological College for the training of Orthodox rabbis in the Midwest. In Philadelphia, until very recently, there were only yeshivot of the supplementary type. Yeshivot of both types, elementary and intermediate, were established in all communities with a sizable number of East European Jewish immigrants. In recent years, some of the minor yeshivot, whose original intent was to preserve the ideal of advanced Talmud study, have also assumed the function of training rabbis.

Between 1881 and 1910, the period of the great Russian Jewish exodus to the United States, Eastern Europe was the scene of very significant developments. The East European Jews came under the strong influence of Haskalah, the movement for the dissemination of European culture among Jews. They were deeply stirred by the Hibbat Zion (Love of Zion) movement; by political Zionism and Golus (Galut) Nationalism; the Hebraic and the Yiddish renaissance; by newer forms of Jewish education, particularly the *Heder Metukkan* or improved heder, and a changed attitude towards secular education. Equally decisive was the influence of the Industrial Revolution (which reached Russia in the late nineties) with all its consequences—the rise of a Jewish working class and its unionization, a specifically Jewish socialist move-

ment, and Jewish participation in Russian revolutionary struggles. The immigrants who came to the United States during the decade before World War I were thus of quite a different type than their predecessors in the two preceding decades. The Russian Jews brought with them new ideas and ideals associated with new political, social, national and cultural movements. Moreover, the last wave of East European immigration contained a much larger proportion of leaders, men who had not only been influenced by the new movements, but had actively participated in them and helped to promulgate their aims.

Jewish education in America was particularly and directly affected by the arrival of trained teachers, fired with an enthusiastic faith in the revitalizing power of Hebrew as a living language. Some of these teachers became pioneers in an effort to modernize American Jewish education through the establishment of schools where Hebrew would be taught as a living language; the classic texts taught in the original Hebrew only after the pupils had been given sufficient linguistic preparation, and where pupils would be given an opportunity to sense the continuity of Jewish creativeness.

Some efforts of this character had been anticipated to a very limited extent by earlier pioneers, the most noteworthy being S. H. Neumann who in 1893 established a school where Hebrew was taught as a living language and where an attempt was made at grading pupils and introducing modern methods. The most significant of similar experiments in later years were: the National Hebrew School for Girls in Brooklyn, the National Hebrew School in Manhattan, and an experiment conducted in Baltimore by Dr. Samson Benderly (1876-1944) who came to this country from Safed in Palestine. The Baltimore experiment arrested the attention of the leaders of American Jewry and profoundly influenced the subsequent development of American Jewish education. Most of the teachers of a new type, who arrived in this



country during the first decade of the twentieth century, attempted to modernize the existing schools. While they made some notable progress, for the most part the difficulties facing them were insurmountable. Particularly discouraging was the low status of the Jewish teacher as reflected in the indignities to which he was subjected, and the miserable salary he received. Many of these teachers, while fulfilling their obligations as conscientiously as conditions permitted, were, in the meantime, actually preparing themselves for other professions.

### III. THE NEW YORK BUREAU OF JEWISH EDUCATION (1910-1941)

The organization of the Bureau of Jewish Education in New York City in 1910 marks the beginning of a new era for Jewish education in New York City, where the Bureau operated, and also indirectly on a national scale. For a long time it had been recognized that there were problems facing Jewish communities in America which could be solved only by a democratically representative community organization. In 1909 the first experiment along this line was inaugurated with the organization of the New York Kehillah under the leadership of Dr. Judah L. Magnes. From its very start, the Kehillah recognized the urgency to deal with the problem of Jewish education as one of its most important functions. To make a survey of the Jewish educational situation in New York City, a committee was appointed, with Dr. Mordecai M. Kaplan as chairman. The report, submitted early in 1910, emphasized the widespread neglect of the religious education of the Jewish children; underscored the educational inefficiency of the existing Jewish schools and characterized the *hadarim* and small Talmud Torahs as a "liability in the attempt to preserve Jewish life." Dr. Samson Benderly, invited as a consultant, pointed out that any attempt to conduct a Jewish educational program for the large number involved with the limited amount of money available would

be futile; but this money, he urged, could be used advantageously for the creation of a "lever" for the uplifting and improvement of Jewish education. The advice was accepted and in the fall of that year the Bureau of Jewish Education was organized, with Dr. Benderly as director.

In line with the original suggestion, the Bureau set itself a fourfold program: "(a) to study sympathetically and at close range all the Jewish educational forces in New York City; (b) to become intimately acquainted with the best teachers and workers who are the mainstay of these institutions and organize them for both their material and spiritual advancement; (c) to make propaganda through the Jewish press and otherwise, in order to acquaint parents with the problem before them and with the means of solving it; (d) to operate one or two model schools for elementary pupils, for the purpose of working out the various phases of primary education."

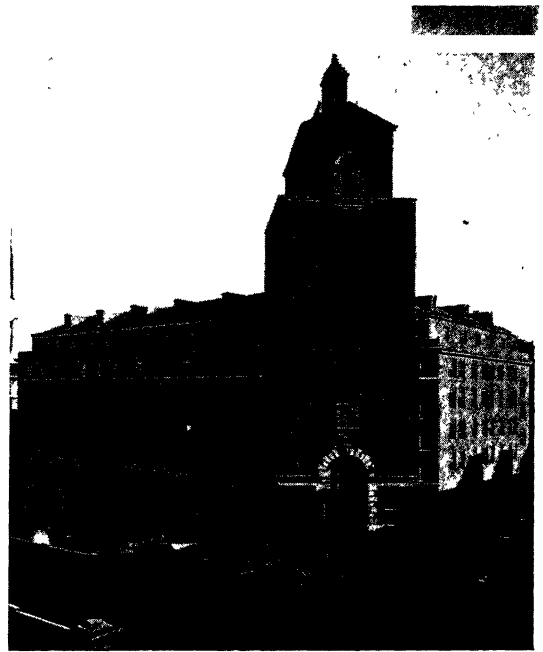
The first year was devoted in the main to an intensified study of "existing institutions of the various systems, their school buildings, equipment, school organization, teachers and textbooks, classroom management, methods and hours of instruction, and the results they have achieved." On the basis of this study Dr. Benderly came to the conclusion that the institution which offered the greatest promise was the larger Talmud Torah. He, therefore, initiated immediate steps for its standardization. These steps were directed towards bringing about improvement, in respect to the pedagogic content and method, financial stability, and personnel. Through a series of conferences, the principals of the eight largest and most promising Talmud Torahs succeeded in outlining a uniformly graded seven-year course of study consisting of: Hebrew; Bible; selections from Mishnah and Midrash; Talmud; medieval and modern Hebrew literature; Jewish history; and religious observance. Hebrew was to be the language of instruction, and to be taught by the "natural method." A fund was established for the purpose of publishing a

series of graded textbooks. These textbooks, when published, constituted a landmark in American Jewish education.

However, school improvement involves more than pedagogic improvement. On Dr. Benderly's initiative an education fund was raised to make possible the elimination of wasteful, undignified and precarious financing of schools. Moreover, stress was placed upon making parents bear responsibility for the cost of educating their children to the extent of one's ability. Grants were given to schools to cover scholarships for pupils, but the number of scholarships was not to exceed one-third of the pupils on register, thus encouraging schools to insist upon tuition fees by parents who could afford to pay. These changes improved the financial status of the schools involved, and also removed the charity school stigma from the Talmud Torah. The collecting of fees was taken from the individual school and turned over to a central agency—a department of investigation, collection, and attendance organized by the Bureau. One of the conditions which schools had to meet in order to be eligible for scholarship grants was the acceptance of the new method of collecting fees. Other conditions pertained to the uniformly graded curriculum, the teacher's qualification, and salary payments.

Dr. Benderly then centered the attention of the community on the problem of personnel. He maintained that for success in Jewish teaching, the teacher must possess all the qualifications required of a public school teacher with particular stress on inspiring personality, thorough Jewish knowledge, understanding of the American Jewish child, religious enthusiasm, and faith in the future of American Jewry. He, therefore, advocated the immediate organization of a board of license which would pass on the qualifications of teachers and certify only those who could meet requirements.

In the late twenties, a permanent board was established which in turn led to a national board of license. This board suc-



JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA IN  
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ceeded in stimulating a number of communities to establish local boards. At the same time standards of remuneration were raised. Provision was also made for assisting teachers who were able to meet some of the basic requirements but were deficient in some particular respect. Courses in English and pedagogy were organized for immigrant teachers, and in Jewish subject matter for American-trained teachers. This activity was carried on with the cooperation of the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary, established a few years previously (1909). As another means of raising the status of the Jewish teacher to the dignity of a profession, steps were taken towards guaranteeing tenure of office to teachers whose services were satisfactory, and towards the elimination of unwholesome personnel practices.

What may perhaps be regarded as Dr. Benderly's major achievement was the winning over of a group of young American-trained men and women to the concurrent study of both Torah and the science of education, in preparation for professional

careers as Jewish educators. In this effort Dr. Benderly was aided by Israel Friedlaender, M. M. Kaplan, Judah L. Magnes and Henrietta Szold. This younger group enlisted by S. Benderly exerted a marked influence on the subsequent development of American Jewish education, as did their mentors who helped steer the Bureau through troubled waters when it came under attack from the left for being too Hebraic, nationalistic, and Orthodox, and from the right for disturbing the traditional pattern of Jewish education and endangering traditional Judaism.

To the emergence of the modern Talmud Torah, groups other than those associated with the Bureau also contributed, particularly the idealistically trained Hebraist teachers already mentioned. These teachers left their impress sometimes through the Bureau or the Hebrew Principals' Association, and sometimes through their own organizations.

The modern Talmud Torah may be said to be a supplementary school housed in a well-built and well-kept school building, soundly financed and organized. It is manned by a staff of efficient professional teachers, with a graded religious-nationalistic curriculum taught by the so-called "natural method" (with Hebrew as the language of instruction). In contradistinction stands the institution which perpetuated the characteristics of the Talmud Torah of the previous period. A third type of Talmud Torah was one in which the Humash continued to be translated into Yiddish, by rote, verse by verse, but which was not impervious to the influences at work in the Hebraic Talmud Torah, and underwent considerable progressive development. Some of these schools, when Yiddish became less and less intelligible to their pupils, indicated a readiness to substitute English; others, however, persisted in the Yiddish translation, because it was part of a traditional pattern. As the Talmud Torahs developed in a forward direction, the hadarim and private melamdin began to

lose their clientele until they have now almost disappeared.

Parallel with the emergence of the modern Talmud Torah in New York went the rise of a similar type of school in all large centers of Jewish population. Particularly noteworthy were the Minneapolis Talmud Torah, for a certain time the Talmud Torah of Indianapolis, and at a later date the communal Hebrew schools of Detroit, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, and Philadelphia.

A simple enumeration of some other activities of the Bureau of Jewish Education will suffice to indicate their wide scope. One of the Bureau's earliest activities was the establishment of experimental schools to serve as educational laboratories for testing new approaches in respect to schedule, curriculum and method. One of the innovations, tried out in these schools and later finding wide acceptance, was the attempt to exert educational influence through Jewish arts and crafts, music and dramatics. Since these experimental schools were for girls, they focussed attention upon the need of Jewish education for girls as well as for boys. In Eastern Europe, where it was not customary for girls to receive Jewish schooling, they nevertheless did receive intensive Jewish training through the influence of the Jewish home. In America, where the Jewish home had lost its educational potency, the neglect of girls' education wrought great havoc. The experimental schools of the Bureau, as well as the Hebrew Folkshuln for girls, led to a changed attitude in this respect. The proportion of girls receiving a Jewish education has increased, but it is still not what it should be.

Another series of experiments (Circle of Jewish Children and League of Jewish Youth) was designed to reach the unschooled through mass education, initiation ceremonies, holiday celebrations, club and social activities and other forms, modern as well as traditional.

Jewish education, as it had developed in America, was largely confined to the elementary level. By gathering together the

graduates of the various Talmud Torahs and organizing a Hebrew high school, the Bureau was able to exert an influence upon boys and girls during the formative years of adolescence. The Bureau used the intermediate school as a lever to force the elementary schools to maintain standards and raise the standards of Hebrew teachers' training schools by furnishing a reservoir of students prepared for advanced studies. The Bureau also experimented with the organization of classes for high school pupils whose elementary Jewish education had been neglected or was very slight. The influence of this high school has extended far beyond the confines of New York City. Similar intermediate schools have been established in Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Detroit, and more recently in other communities. Indirectly, the Bureau was responsible for the Central Jewish Institute, which represented an attempt to discover a new type of Jewish educational philosophy, growing directly out of the conditions of American Jewish life. It also may be said to have stimulated the first experiments in summer camping with a Jewish educational program. This outline may perhaps suffice to indicate that the Bureau successfully implemented the original intention for which it was designed—the creation of a *lever* for the improvement and uplifting of Jewish education.

#### IV. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The last thirty or forty years have seen some very significant and varied developments in Jewish education in respect of the number of pupils reached and the range and scope of the educational program. No attempt will be made to trace these developments in detail, but they have to be recorded, at least briefly, by category. (For Yiddish educational institutions, see special article.)

##### 1. HEBREW TEACHERS' COLLEGES

The first Hebrew teachers' training school in the United States was the Gratz

College of Philadelphia. It was established in the nineties under Hyman Gratz's will providing the funds which became available in 1893. It maintained standards as high as conditions of the day permitted. Its subsequent progress corresponds with that made in the city of Philadelphia in the area of elementary and secondary education. Approximately five hundred young men and women have been graduated from Gratz College and have played an important role in the Jewish educational institutions of Philadelphia.

The pioneer teacher training institution was the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary, established in 1909 under the leadership of Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan. The Teachers Institute cooperated closely with the Bureau of Jewish Education, and many of the improvements in Jewish education in New York were made possible by this cooperative effort. The Teachers Institute was the first institution to establish morning courses for the more thorough training of its professional students in Jewish content and education, and to receive a state charter authorizing it to grant the Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctor's degrees in Jewish Pedagogy. In 1929 an arrangement with Columbia University made it possible for students to prepare themselves in a five-year course for a baccalaureate degree from Columbia and the Teachers Institute simultaneously. The Institute also encouraged students with advanced training who were not interested in the Hebrew teaching profession, to pursue advanced Hebrew studies in the evening while pursuing academic studies during the day. Another area opened up by the Institute was that of extension adult education, in which emphasis was laid on sustained, systematic study. As a by-product of this effort, courses were given for the training of Sunday school teachers and club leaders.

In 1917 the Orthodox community elements established a teachers' training school known as the Mizrahi Teachers Institute. This school was subsequently transferred to the jurisdiction of the Isaac Elchanan

Theological Seminary. In contrast with the Teachers Institute, the Seminary stressed the Hebrew classics rather than specific preparation for molding American Jewish life through new forms of adjustment fostered by the Jewish school. The graduates of this school have played an important role in the Hebraization and modernization of Orthodox Jewish education.

In 1919 and 1920, Hebrew teachers' colleges were established in Baltimore and Boston respectively. These institutions have consistently maintained a high standard of modern Hebraic education and served as levers for standardizing elementary Hebrew education.

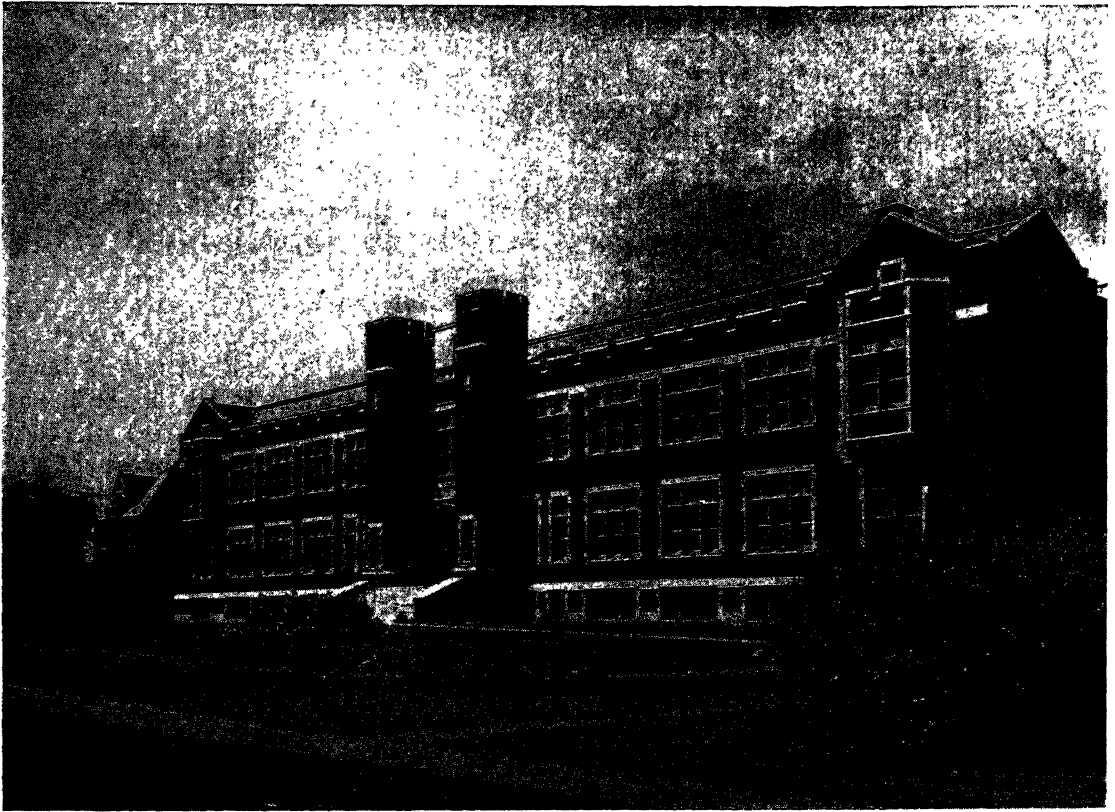
In 1923 the Herzliah Hebrew Academy was established in New York. It was an outgrowth of a secondary school organized previously. In scope it paralleled the two institutions for teacher-training in New York. It was sponsored by a group primarily concerned with the cultivation of Hebrew as a living language, and laid its main stress upon the products of Jewish creativity in the Hebrew language during recent times.

In 1924 a college, known as the College of Jewish Studies, was established by the Board of Jewish Education in Chicago. It was reorganized in 1929 and, thanks to the Central Hebrew High School which had been established during the interval, was able to set standards conforming with those already set up by other institutions of this type. It paralleled the Teachers Institute by organizing departments of advanced Hebrew studies, Sunday school teacher and club leader training, and general studies. Because it was located in the center of the city and housed the Board of Jewish Education's large Jewish library, the College became the hub of Jewish intellectual activity for the entire community. Courses for Jewish teachers were also established in Cleveland and Pittsburgh. Two additional teacher-training schools for women were established during recent years by the Orthodox communities of New York and Chicago respectively.

## 2. RISE OF THE CONSERVATIVE CONGREGATIONAL SCHOOL

Since the close of the First World War, the conservative movement has shown signs of a substantial growth. Whenever a new congregation has been founded, a new school has been organized. During the twenties, Jews began to move from the neighborhoods of original settlement, and the large modern Talmud Torah with a school population ranging from 500 to 2,000, which had emerged during the period immediately preceding the war, began to show a marked decline in registration. As Jews moved into new neighborhoods, a tendency developed among those interested in intensive Jewish education to send their children to the weekday afternoon schools, connected with congregations. These schools were modelled on the Talmud Torahs, except that the hours of instruction were fewer and the program correspondingly less intensive. The problem of attenuation was aggravated by the fact that standards were lower than in the modern Talmud Torah. For the reason, however, that the congregation catered to the entire family, there was a closer relation between the work of the religious school and the religious life of the family, and this tended to give the school a somewhat greater holding power. The attenuated program was not the result of the weakening of Jewish loyalties and interests, but to a large degree reflected a process which had already set in among the adults. Consequently, in almost every instance, the registration of the weekday school was very much smaller than that of the Sunday school which was rapidly developing into the customary educational agency for the descendants of the East European immigrants, as it had become for those of their predecessors.

One means of combating this tendency, initiated in Chicago through the Chicago Board of Jewish Education and emulated in other communities, was a decision on the part of Conservative congregations to refuse the use of the synagogue for the



*Courtesy Union of American Hebrew Congregations*  
 HEBREW UNION COLLEGE, CINCINNATI, OHIO

public celebration of Bar-Mitzvot unless the boy had completed a minimum of three years' study in the weekday school. There was, moreover, a growing movement among Conservative rabbis to limit Sunday schools to primary education and to give boys of eight and over and girls of a slightly higher age no alternative but weekday instruction. Recently, the United Synagogue and the Rabbinical Assembly established a Commission on Education for the purpose of improving curricula and methods, publishing a graded series of textbooks, and taking other steps necessary for the vitalization of the congregational weekday school. Experiments were also conducted with summer camp educational programs and other new forms of Jewish education, to qualify a nucleus in each school for eventual admission to the Hebrew teachers' colleges and the Jewish Theological Seminary.

### 3. NEW TRENDS IN REFORM EDUCATION

While the Orthodox Jewish community was endeavoring to develop an educational institution both adapted to the needs of the American Jewish child and capable of providing for intensive study of the sources of Judaism, the Reform community continued to develop its Sunday schools. Little by little, the volunteer teacher was giving way to the paid teacher, but by the very nature of one-day-a-week education, the paid teacher could be semi-professional at best. These semi-professional teachers were frequently ill-prepared for their task. Moreover, a deeper understanding of the process of religious education led to increasing dissatisfaction with the curriculum, methods and textbooks of the Sunday school. In consequence, in the early twenties the Union of American Hebrew Congregations

decided to reorganize its department of education with professional aid.

The Commission on Jewish Education, representing both the Union and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, set itself a program of wide scope: 1) to influence Reform congregations to extend their religious education program from one to two or three sessions per week; 2) to prepare a graded course of study for Reform religious schools; 3) to issue a series of graded textbooks in every branch of Jewish religious study in order to facilitate the introduction of this course of study, in which due care would be given to pedagogic considerations from the standpoint of content, method of treatment, vocabulary, and outward appearance; and 4) to work out a system of teacher-training with particular reference to needs of the religious school in the smaller communities. Not much progress has been made with the first of these aims, although some Reform schools have been stimulated to add one or more sessions. Not unrelated to this aim has been the changed attitude in the Reform schools towards Hebrew, which has been reintroduced. The Commission's most noteworthy contribution, however, is a remarkable series of textbooks which have led to a complete reorientation of the religious school program.

#### 4. GROWTH OF COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

Perhaps one of the most significant and striking single developments during the recent period was the growing consciousness that the solution of the Jewish educational problem required the joint efforts of the entire community. This development was a phase of the general growth of community responsibility which had led to the development of Federations of Philanthropic Agencies and Jewish Welfare Funds; in particular, it was an expression of increasing concern with the problem of Jewish education. In New York, both the New York and Brooklyn Federations took over responsibility for limited support of

a limited number of schools. The Jewish Education Association (J.E.A.) was organized as the community's special agency responsible for the financial stabilization of Jewish schools. This Association was an important factor in the improvement of New York Talmud Torahs, establishing standards for school buildings and for teaching personnel by means of grants accorded only to schools conforming with these standards. It was through the efforts of the J.E.A. that the first permanent board of license was set up. In the larger Jewish communities outside of New York, the local federations assumed the support of the Talmud Torahs or communal Hebrew schools. The agencies, created for the purpose of distributing federation grants to Hebrew schools, interpreted their function to include manifold phases of community responsibility. They helped bring into being central community high schools, Jewish teacher-training schools, and colleges of Jewish studies, as well as organizations of Jewish youth designed to reach the untutored in Jewish traditions.

The Board of Jewish Education of Chicago went one step further and established a new pattern; by entering into a friendly relationship with congregational schools, the Board succeeded in getting these schools to conform to standards cooperatively worked out in democratic fashion. Since these schools were financially autonomous and in no way dependent upon the central community agency, there was considerable skepticism about the result, many maintaining that influence without control was impossible. Experience proved the contrary: as the autonomous schools became increasingly aware of the benefits to be derived from subjecting themselves voluntarily to the discipline of a community program, the readiness to do so correspondingly increased. In time, the Yiddish schools, too, joined the system; a new outlook evolved which crystallized in the phrase *Unity in Diversity*. The guiding idea behind this viewpoint is that the various elements of the community which

share a positive attitude towards Judaism and Jewish life can continue to hold divergent points of view and yet act in common to foster the underlying unity of American Jewish life.

The program of the Jewish Education Committee of New York which came into existence in 1939 is a notable embodiment of this point of view. During the last decade, many of the smaller Jewish communities have also accepted this principle and have organized their Jewish educational programs on a community basis, allowing each element complete liberty of interpreting Judaism and Jewish life in its own way, but insisting upon unity within this diversified program and upon a cooperative effort to raise and maintain the standards of all elements. There are at present thirty such central community agencies for Jewish education in the United States (there is one in Canada), and two regional agencies (for the southern half of the State of Illinois and for the State of Maine). A prime mover in this development has been the American Association of Jewish Education, a central body organized in 1939 for the purpose of promoting Jewish education in the United States, aiding in the advancement of standards of instruction and of professional service, encouraging research and experimentation, and stimulating communal responsibility and local organization of Jewish educational endeavor.

##### 5. HIGHER EDUCATION

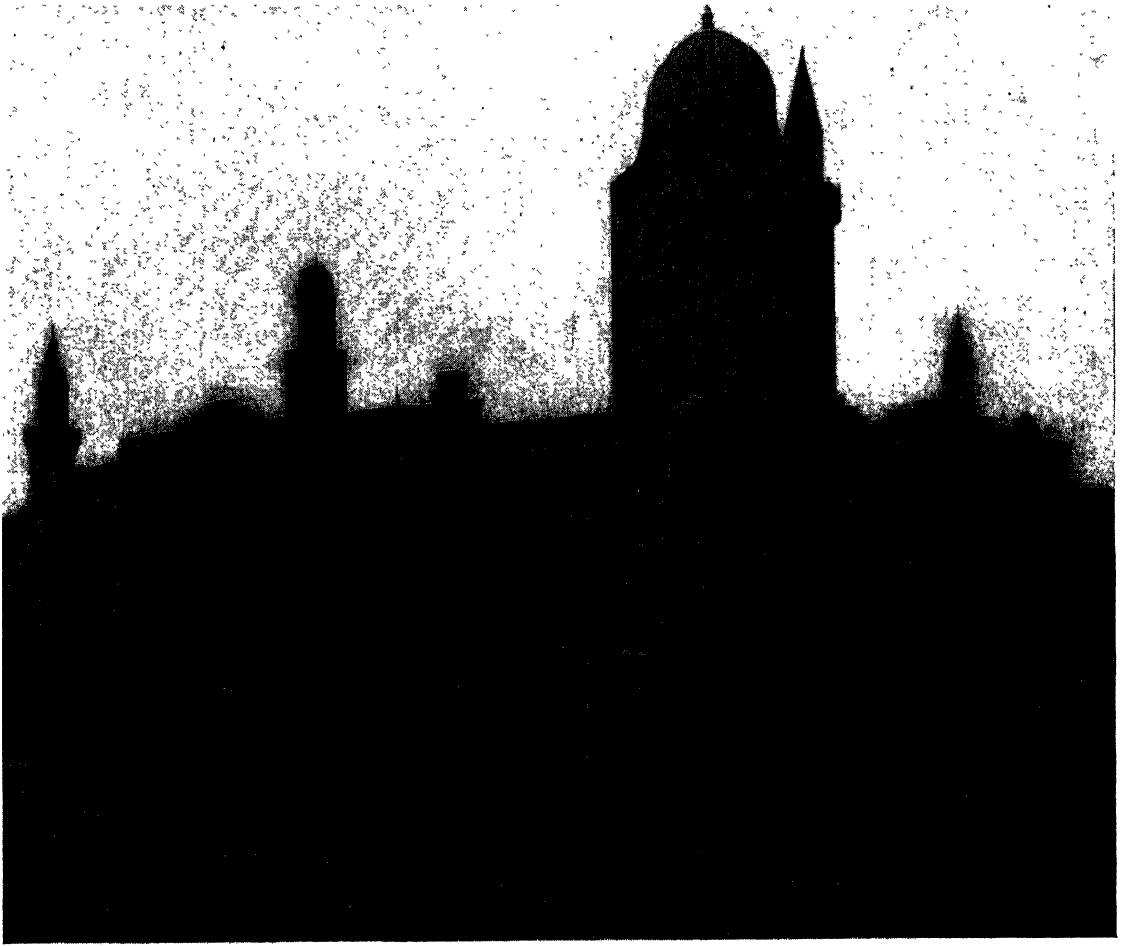
The progress of Jewish institutions of higher learning is beyond the scope of this survey, but in addition to those already mentioned, it is necessary to note two institutions of higher Jewish learning which were established during the more recent period. The first is the Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, founded in Philadelphia in 1909, as a non-sectarian post-graduate college specializing in Biblical and Rabbinic studies, Jewish history, Semitic languages, and Egyptology. Many of its alumni occupy important academic positions and have made scholarly contribu-

tions in these fields. The other is the Jewish Institute of Religion established by Dr. Stephen S. Wise in 1922, "to train men and women for the Jewish ministry, research and community service; to study scientifically Jewish literature, history and religious experience; to make available to the general public constructive knowledge of Judaism." During the twenty-five years of its existence, it has made a notable contribution to the religious and spiritual development of American Jewry.

There have been several attempts to establish training schools for Jewish social service: the School for Jewish Communal Work (1915-1918) established by Dr. Benderly; The Graduate School for Jewish Social Work (1925-1939), and The Training Bureau for Jewish Social Service established in the summer of 1947. In 1945 Dropsie College opened a graduate school for the training of leaders in the field of Jewish education. This marked a new development and indicated recognition of the status of the Jewish teaching profession. The Seminary and Yeshivah University have similarly taken steps to establish graduate courses designed to train leaders in the teaching profession.

The improvement of the professional status of the Jewish educator cannot be attributed to outside forces exclusively. It is in large measure due to efforts exerted within the profession itself. Reference has already been made to the role played by local organizations of Hebrew principals and teachers. During recent years, teachers have organized themselves into a national federation which has stressed the importance of professional standards. An influential part in this development was played by the National Council of Jewish Education, an organization of individuals in key positions in the field, founded in 1926. The Council publishes a professional magazine, *Jewish Education*, which has had a marked influence on educational progress. Together with the National Federation of Hebrew Teachers and the Histadrut Ivrit, the 'Council' also helps





YESHIVAH UNIVERSITY IN NEW YORK CITY

publish a Hebrew pedagogic journal, *Shvilei ha-Hinnuk*, which has also helped to raise the professional status of the Hebrew teacher.

#### 6. YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION

The story of Jewish education in the United States would not be complete without the indication that Jewish educational activity was not confined to educational institutions in the usual academic sense. The Jewish Community Center has more and more often reinterpreted its function as including all forms of activity which bear on the wholesome development of Jewish personality. Jewish centers have not only housed educational activities, but have

also initiated the organization of classes, lectures and other direct educational activities. The B'nai B'rith has in recent years carried on both in its lodges and in its youth organizations many activities of specifically educational character. Particularly noteworthy is its work with Jewish youth on college campuses through its Hillel Foundations. The Jewish Chautauqua Society, established in 1893, formerly concerned with the organization of Jewish study circles in unorganized Jewish communities and in disseminating Jewish knowledge through special correspondence courses, has since 1909 been responsible for bringing information about Judaism and Jewish institutions to faculties and student bodies of American

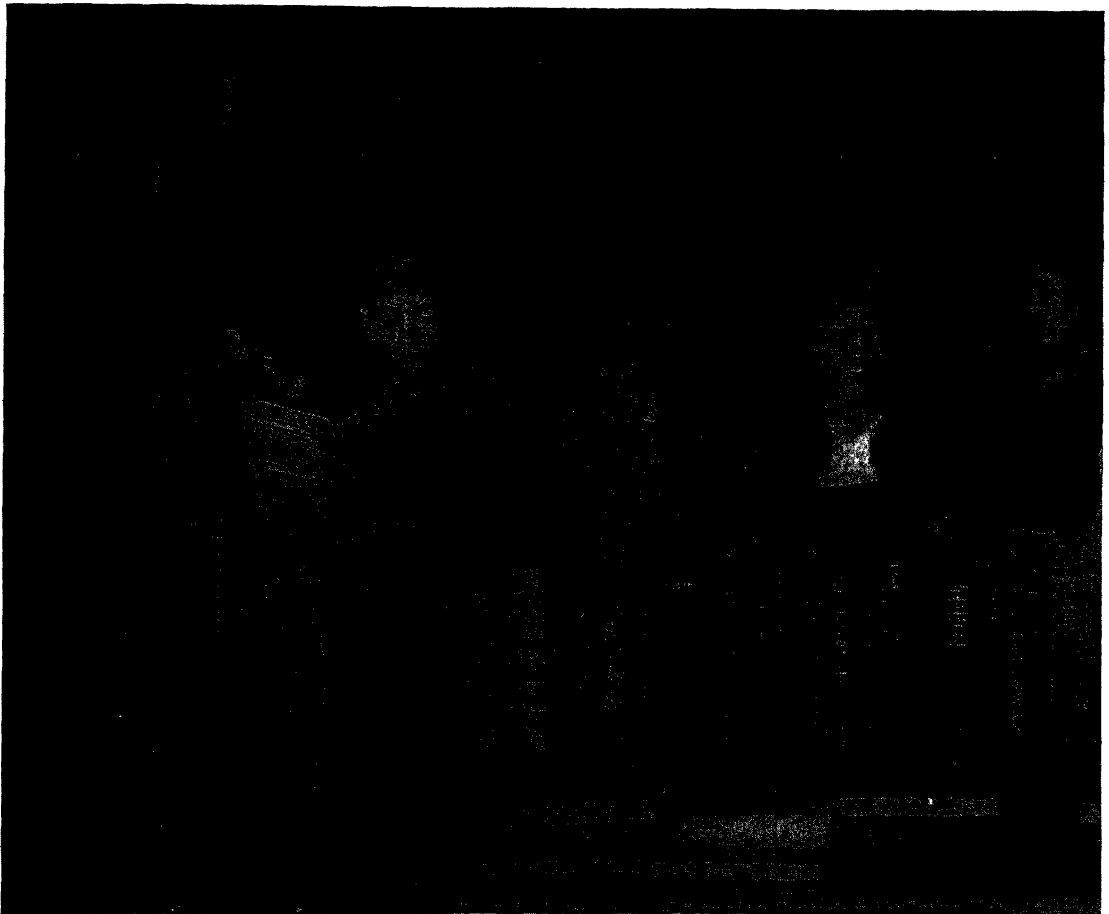
colleges, and for supplying college libraries with collections of Jewish books.

The ramified Jewish educational programs of all American Jewish communities, large and small, also include lectures, forums, panels, institutes and seminars, arranged by the various Zionist organizations, youth and adult, for their members as well as for the community at large. Similar activities are carried on by the Council of Jewish Women, Histadrut Ivrit, and other national and local Jewish organizations. Sometimes these activities are of a purely academic nature and are conducted with the cooperation of colleges of Jewish studies and other educational institutions. Finally, the syna-

gogues, too, carry on adult educational programs, dealing with various phases of Judaism, Jewish history, literature and life, and including instruction in the Hebrew language. When there is emphasis on sustained study, these courses begin to resemble the more formal educational programs of academic institutions. In some communities, through the initiative of the central agency for Jewish education, efforts are directed towards co-ordinating these various educational programs in accordance with the already mentioned principle of unity in diversity.

#### 7. NEW TRENDS

A remarkable and even striking change in Jewish educational attitudes is indicated



*Courtesy Jewish Educational Association of Indianapolis*

**CHILDREN AT BOOK EXHIBIT ARRANGED BY JEWISH EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF NEW YORK**

by the recent growth of Jewish all-day schools. A survey of all-day schools made by the Department of Research and Information of the American Association for Jewish Education in 1947 revealed that there were 101 partly complete elementary and secondary all-day schools; of these 58 were in New York City and 43 in 32 other communities. Six cities other than New York reported more than one. Except for one school which was established in Baltimore in 1917, the all-day schools outside of New York City were all established during the last decade. The first Yiddish all-day school was established in 1946, in Brooklyn, by the Jewish National Workers' Alliance. Total enrollment for all-day schools for 1946-47 was 14,835 (6.3% of total enrollment in all Jewish schools).

The sponsors of these schools agree that it would be wrong for the Jewish community to establish a "parochial" system of education; they concede that Jewish children should, by and large, receive their secular education in the public school and their Jewish education in a weekday supplementary school. They contend, however, that there is room for a limited number of private schools which are interested in experimenting with the integration of secular and Jewish education. They also maintain that such experiments are necessary to insure the development within each community of a nucleus of Jews with a more thorough knowledge of Torah than it is possible to attain in a supplementary school under the best of conditions. The experimentation along this line has been particularly popular in the areas of pre-school, kindergarten, and early primary education.

A growing number of schools have been

modelled on the Beth Hayalet (The Child's House) which was established in New York for experimentation in an integrated program of education for very young children (four to eight-year olds). The standards maintained in some of these schools have been very high. Another recent trend is the utilization of the summer for Jewish education through Jewish living, by establishing country camps and city day camps with a specific Jewish educational program. The number of such camps has rapidly increased during recent years.

## 8. SUMMARY

According to Uriah Z. Engelman, in 1946, 231,028 Jewish children were enrolled in Jewish schools. Of these, 110,663 were enrolled in 296 weekday afternoon schools. Sixty-two percent of the children enrolled in weekday schools were attending four or five sessions, and 37.2%, two or three sessions. Children enrolled in Sunday schools totalled 120,365 (there is a certain amount of duplication involved because some pupils attend both weekday and Sunday schools).

Jewish education in the United States has undoubtedly made progress. It has become more attractive and, to some degree, more dynamic. American Jews, however, have not as yet found an adequate solution to their educational problem—how they can best instil in the young people a love and appreciation of genuine Jewish values which could be translated into concrete experience, and how to generate such a loyalty towards the Jewish cause which would enhance their sense of responsibility as Jews and Americans. The search for a solution is still going on.

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# JEWISH EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Zevi Scharfstein

1. Argentina  
A. The JCA Schools, the Talmud Torahs and the Religious Courses; B. The Party Schools; C. The Period of Synthesis.
2. Brazil
3. Chile
4. Uruguay and other countries in South America
5. Cuba
6. Mexico

The first Jewish settlers in Latin America were of Marrano extraction. These, as well as the later Jewish immigrants, intermingled with the native population and were completely absorbed by them. The modern Jewish communities, comprising approximately 600,000 persons scattered throughout the Latin American countries, are of comparatively recent date. The large majority of Latin American Jewry today, therefore, consists of immigrants and their children. The course of Jewish cultural activities, and particularly of Jewish education, is thus a faithful reflection of the social and ideological trends in general Jewish life during the past fifty years.

## 1. ARGENTINA

A. *The JCA Schools, the Talmud Torahs and the Religious Courses:* The oldest and largest of the South American Jewish communities is in Argentina, with an estimated total of 350,000 Jews, more than one-half of whom reside in the capital, Buenos Aires. The beginnings of a large and planned Jewish immigration into the country go back to the days of Baron Maurice de Hirsch who, through the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA),

founded by him in 1891, attempted to settle a number of Jews on the soil (see special article in this volume on Jewish Colonization). The pioneers of the Jewish colonies in Argentina brought with them a fixed pattern of Jewish life and deeply rooted Jewish traditions. The JCA colony in Argentina was thus a replica of the small Jewish town in Eastern Europe.

Had these newcomers remained wholly unhampered in the management of their lives they would undoubtedly have established the same educational institutions with which they were familiar from their homes—the heder, the Talmud Torah, and perhaps even the Hebrew school of the modern type. However, the JCA assumed tutelage over all aspects of their lives, material as well as spiritual, and established a school in every Jewish colony, modelled after the pattern of the schools of the Alliance Israélite in the Near East. The object of these schools was to impart to the pupil the elements of arithmetic, and reading and writing in the language of the country. Jewish studies were limited to a reading knowledge of Hebrew prayers and a rudimentary knowledge of Jewish history (taught in Spanish), the peak of attainment consisting of a translation of a few sentences from the Pentateuch.

Occasionally, a school would be fortunate in obtaining a qualified teacher who could instruct the pupils in the Bible and the commentary of Rashi. Moisesville, the oldest of the colonies, was fortunate in securing such a teacher in the person of Reuben ha-Cohen Sinai, whose school won wide acclaim, and who also organized an

adult group for the study of the Mishnah. In the other colonies, however, Jewish education was in a sad state. Nevertheless, the home atmosphere was still strongly Jewish and thus in a measure made up for the deficiencies of formal education. At times the colonists would gather in the home of one of their number for the study of the Scriptures or the Talmud, frequently bringing their children with them in the hope that they might absorb some of the traditional teachings. Some parents undertook the Jewish education of their children themselves; others hired private instructors. In the colony Feinberg a yeshivah was established, headed by Aryeh Leib Vinokur, the author of a Hebrew-Spanish dictionary. However, this yeshivah was soon forced to close its doors.

Parallel with the development of the colonies, there was a steady growth of the Jewish communities in the capital as well as other urban centers. But here Jewish traditional life declined at an even more rapid rate than in the colonies. Of some importance was the founding of several Talmud Torahs by orthodox Jews as supplementary schools. In 1896 the Talmud Torah ha-Rishonah (First Talmud Torah) was opened in Buenos Aires, followed, a decade later, by the Talmud Torah Doctor Herzl. The two institutions subsequently merged. In 1908-19, two more Talmud Torahs were established, but the influence of the schools amounted to very little, and the number of Jewish children receiving no Jewish education at all steadily grew.

A new period in Jewish education in Argentina began in 1911. Dr. Halfen, a graduate of the Seminary of the Alliance Israélite, was sent by the JCA as rabbi of the colonies. He found the schools in a chaotic condition and embarked upon a program of reform. He established *religious courses*, organized a central agency for the administration and supervision of the schools, introduced qualification tests for teachers, and urged the parents to share in the maintenance of the schools.

In 1911 seven courses were opened, with an enrollment of 470. In 1912 the number of courses rose to fifteen, and the enrollment to 1,089. This growth continued the following years, and in 1923 the number of courses grew to 93, with a student body of 6,129 and 112 teachers.

Nevertheless, the educational attainments of the courses were not very satisfactory. The scanty education the youth had acquired in the religious courses was soon forgotten, and the environment, too, had its effect. Religious life was rapidly disintegrating; the Sabbath was no longer observed; the synagogues were empty. In some cities only a negligible number of children received any kind of Jewish education.

B. *The Party Schools*: After World War I, the new stream of immigration brought a new type of Jewish settler to Argentina—men schooled in the Jewish political parties of Eastern Europe. These were dynamic people, experienced in the ways and methods of propaganda, who at once set out to establish schools in consonance with their ideologies.

The orientation of these schools was largely secular. The first Yiddish school, the National Radical School, had been established in 1917 by a group of Poale Zion. This school was followed by several other Yiddish schools named after famous Jewish writers, such as Sholem Aleichem, Mendele Mocher Seforim and Peretz. In 1919 the first Borochof School (Poale Zion) was established. The more radical groups opened Workers' Schools. In 1927 there were in Buenos Aires five Borochof Schools and eight Workers' Schools. With the rise of reaction in Argentina, in 1930, the government began to look askance at the radical schools and eventually ordered them to be closed.

C. *The Period of Synthesis*: In 1928-1929 the Hayim Nahman Bialik Schools were opened in Buenos Aires. In these schools both Hebrew and Yiddish were taught. In addition, they included in their programs such extracurricular activities as

clubs, libraries, wall newspapers, and the like.

In 1931 the Society for Yiddish Secular Schools was organized by a group with a Bundist orientation. A year later the Central Yiddish Secular School Society (Poale Zion) was established. At the same time a number of Mende schools were opened by the Folks-Farband, but in 1937 these last were closed by the government. Under the influence of the secular Yiddish and Hebrew schools the Talmud Torahs underwent considerable changes, extending their curricula to include such subjects as Yiddish, Hebrew, Jewish history, etc., in addition to the purely religious courses of study. This development resulted in narrowing the gap between the various types of Jewish schools. In 1936 a Board of Education was established by the Hevrah Kadisha (the Jewish Kehillah in Buenos Aires) for the purpose of co-ordinating, as far as possible, the curricula in all the Jewish schools in the city and giving them financial support as well as guidance and administrative aid. The Board is not committed to any specific ideology, regards tolerantly every positive orientation in Jewish life, and employs two supervisors—one for the Hebrew and one for the Yiddish schools—who cooperate with each other. In 1940 there were affiliated with the Board 34 Talmud Torahs, two Hebrew schools, and ten Yiddish-Hebrew schools. By 1947 the number of schools affiliated with the Board had risen to 60. These schools received financial aid from the Board to the extent of about one-third of their expenditures. The Board also opened a teachers' seminary, which has an enrollment of 250 students, 70 percent of whom are girls. The students have 18 hours of class work per week. The seminary maintains a branch in Moisesville.

On the whole, there is a definite tendency toward the improvement of Jewish education. Several Talmud Torahs have united into the Central Talmud Torah. A number of magnificent school buildings have been erected, others are in the process

of being built. The most impressive of these buildings is the Yiddish Sholem Aleichem School, under the auspices of the left-wing Poale Zion, with an enrollment of 1,400 pupils. The curriculum includes some Hebrew, customs and ceremonies, and emphasizes contemporary Jewish life. Among other schools housed in their own buildings are: the Y. L. Peretz School (Bund orientation); the Zhitlovsky School; and the Z. Raisin School. On the outskirts of Buenos Aires there are two Bialik schools, in modern school buildings, one of them with some 300 pupils, and the other with about 100.

Buenos Aires has approximately 25,000 Sephardic Jews. The best-known of their schools is Yesod ha-Torah (Foundation of the Torah), with an enrollment of about 500 pupils and a faculty of 12.

There are also some 20,000 German Jews in Buenos Aires, most of them refugees from Hitler Germany. For the children of this group courses in religion have been established modelled on those in Germany, and classes are held once a week.

The provincial schools have their own Board of Education with which more than 60 schools are affiliated. Best known of these is the Yahadut School in Moisesville. The school has 180 pupils.

Rosario has a Yiddish school (Sholem Aleichem), and a Yiddish-Hebrew school (Hayim Nahman Bialik) with an enrollment of 120 pupils. Most of the provincial schools are small, having only one teacher.

In most of the Jewish schools the pupils attend from two to three hours per day. Attendance in the country's general public schools amounts to no more than four hours per day; thus, the Jewish children have the possibility of spending a full half-day in the Jewish schools. When the Jewish schools are large enough to make possible a proper division into age groups and classes, a recognizable educational result can be achieved.

On the whole, however, the state of Jewish education in Argentina is far from satisfactory. Although a large number of

the adults still speak Yiddish, and Jewish communal activities are conducted in that language, the younger generation speaks Spanish. The children attend the Jewish schools only for an average of two to three years; a substantial proportion of the Jewish children receive no Jewish education at all.

## 2. BRAZIL

Jewish immigrants began to arrive in Brazil in considerable numbers after 1924, when entry into the United States was sharply restricted. It is estimated that in 1920 Brazil had 6,000 Jews. From 1925 to 1939, there was an influx of 48,579 Jews. At present, the Jewish population in the country is estimated at more than 100,000. The largest Jewish communities are in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

The most important Jewish educational institution in Rio is the Jewish Secondary School. This school is accredited by the state, and the language of instruction in general subjects is Portuguese. Hebrew is studied seven hours a week, and Yiddish three. The budget of the institution is covered primarily by tuition fees.

The Board of Education maintains four other Jewish schools in the city. These have five grades, and instruction, limited to Jewish subjects, is given for two hours a day. The largest of these schools is the Herzliah, with an enrollment of 220 pupils. The Bialik School had 100 students in 1946. The other two are the Mendele School and the Abraham Liesin School. In addition there are two secular Yiddish schools—the Sholem Aleichem School with an enrollment of 200 pupils, and the Peretz School. The orthodox groups have an all-day Talmud Torah, with classes in industrial arts, and the first grades of a secondary school.

São Paulo, the second largest Jewish community in Brazil, has an all-day Jewish school and kindergarten, which has its own modern building. Instruction is given for three hours a day in Hebrew and in Yiddish. The school also has a prepara-

tory course for teachers. The Floetlich School has an enrollment of 150 pupils, divided into five grades, with instruction for three hours a day. The curriculum consists of Hebrew, Bible and Jewish history. In addition, there are an Orthodox Talmud Torah and a secular Yiddish school.

From 1936 to 1946, the state banned Zionism and the public use of a foreign language. This ban paralyzed Jewish communal life and brought Jewish educational activity almost to a standstill. With the fall of the Vargas regime in 1946, the ban was lifted. Jewish communal life has since then experienced a great upsurge, extending also to Jewish education. However, the serious shortage of teachers is a heavy handicap to further progress.

## 3. CHILE

Two-thirds of the Jewish population of Chile (some 25,000) live in Santiago, 2,000 in Valparaiso, and the rest scattered in small groups throughout the cities and towns of the country. Only a small number of all the Jewish children of school age receive any form of Jewish education. They attend either an all-day Jewish school or semi-weekly courses. The provincial towns have no all-day schools. Semi-weekly schools are also attended in Santiago by the children of the recent Jewish arrivals from Germany, the curriculum consisting of reading of Hebrew, translation of prayers and excerpts from the Bible into German. The Hevrah Kadisha offers similar courses to the children of orthodox parents, with Yiddish instead of German as the language of instruction. There are two all-day schools—the Bialik School, a modern Hebrew-Yiddish school, with an enrollment of 115 pupils, and a secondary school, Instituto Hebreo, with an enrollment of 270 students. The latter, housed in its own building, was opened in 1930 as a primary public school, following the standard curriculum, with the addition of Jewish studies. The Instituto Hebreo now includes a six-year elementary course, a secondary



school and a kindergarten. It is recognized by the state and receives a state subvention.

#### 4. URUGUAY AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN SOUTH AMERICA

The Jewish community in Uruguay had its beginnings in the nineteen-twenties. It numbers more than 30,000 at present, and is concentrated mainly in the capital, Montevideo. The community is under the spiritual influence of Argentine Jewry. There are a number of supplementary Jewish schools in which both Hebrew and Yiddish are taught. Montevideo has a Board of Education which gives financial support to these schools. Two educational institutions are not affiliated with the Board: the school maintained by the Mizrachi and the Bet Yaakov School. In both the emphasis is on religion. The Sephardic groups have a Talmud Torah, named after Eliezer Ben Yehudah, which is conducted after the manner of the Talmud Torahs in the lands of their origin.

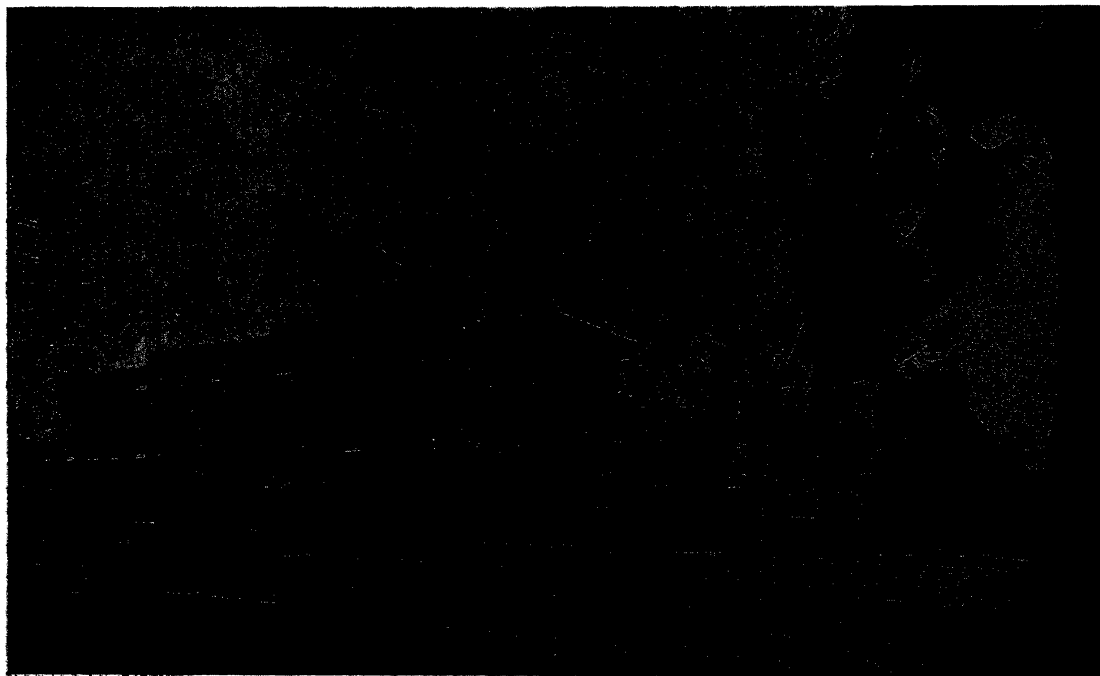
In Caracas, Venezuela, a Jewish all-day school was opened in 1946, with an enrollment of 130 pupils.

La Paz, Bolivia, has a supplementary Jewish school, established by arrivals from Germany, in which Hebrew is taught by modern methods.

Costa Rica has only 200 Jewish families, all residing in the capital, San José. They have a Jewish center, a synagogue and a Yiddish school.

#### 5. CUBA

There are some 10,000 Jews in Cuba. The first school was established in Havana in 1924 by Sephardic Jews. This was an all-day school, giving instruction in both Jewish and secular subjects. It was later taken over by the Centro Israelita, the organization of the Yiddish-speaking Jews in Havana, under the name of Collegio Hebreo. Secular studies are taught in Spanish; Jewish studies include Hebrew, Yiddish, Jewish history and Jewish literature, all taught in Yiddish. In 1939 the



THE YIDDISH SCHOOL—COLEGIO ISRAELITA—IN MEXICO CITY.

school was reorganized as an autonomous school, its budget being covered by tuition fees, and by a subvention from the Centro Israelita. There is also a Yiddish Sholem Aleichem School and a Yavneh School (Zionist). The combined enrollment in all these schools is some 500.

## 6. MEXICO

The Jewish community in Mexico is comparatively young, dating mainly from the nineteen-twenties. Prior to that time there were a small number of Sephardic Jews in the country. In 1924 the first Jewish school, giving instruction in Spanish, English, Hebrew and Yiddish was opened in Mexico City. In 1927 the name of the school was changed to Yidishe Shul, and the study of religion was discontinued.

In 1929 the Yidishe Shul received state recognition. With the increase in immigration, its enrollment rose rapidly. Commercial and secondary courses were introduced, and the school began to attract many Jewish pupils who had been attending English and French private schools. In 1935 there were 534 pupils in all the various departments. In 1945 the number rose to 894. In the meantime there arose a growing demand that courses in Bible and Jewish cultural backgrounds be introduced in the curriculum. The request was granted. The curriculum is now based on Yiddish language and literature, Hebrew, history, Bible and Jewish customs and traditions. About ten hours per week are devoted to these subjects. The school is

housed in its own magnificent building. During the summer, the school conducts several student camps.

In 1942 a group of Zionist parents established the Tarbut School, similar in its program to that of its namesake in Poland. At first, the school had only a kindergarten and four grades. In 1945 it had more than 200 students. The curriculum consists of Bible, Hebrew language and literature, Yiddish language and literature, history and courses on Palestine. A school of the same type has also been established in San Luis.

The congregation Nidhei Yisrael in Mexico City had a supplementary Talmud Torah which, in 1942, was converted into an all-day school, Yavneh, conducted in the traditional religious spirit of the Mizrachi. The initial enrollment was small, but now it is close to 300.

The Sephardim who came from Damascus also have a Tarbut School (the name was borrowed from the Ashkenazic school) with their own building. This is an all-day school, with an enrollment of some 500 pupils. The synagogue Tsedaka u-Marpeh, established by immigrants from Aleppo, Syria, has a supplementary school in which the principal subjects taught are prayers and Bible.

On the whole, the state of Jewish education in Mexico may be described as fair, with most of the Jewish children receiving their education in Jewish schools, and only a minority attending private non-Jewish schools.

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# JEWISH EDUCATION IN THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

Zevi Scharfstein

1. Great Britain
2. Canada
3. South Africa
4. Australia

## 1. GREAT BRITAIN

Until 1876 England had no compulsory education law. Each community or religious congregation maintained its own schools which offered instruction in both religious and secular subjects. Accordingly, the first (Sephardic) Jewish settlers in modern times had to provide not only for religious but also for secular education, and to establish schools combining both educational aspects.

The first school of this type, Shaare Hatikvah (Gates of Hope), was founded in 1664 by Sephardic Jews, and functioned in London for many years. In the nineteenth century a large number of East European Jews migrated to England. The exigencies of economic and socio-cultural adjustment absorbed all the energies of the new arrivals, and the education of their children suffered consequent neglect. The older Jewish settlers came to their aid and established a system of so-called "Jewish Free Schools."

The curriculum in these schools was determined in accordance with the conception of Judaism held by the founders, rather than the outlook and convictions of the parents. To the Jewish philanthropists in England Jewishness was exclusively a creed; their educational program, therefore, called for no more than a knowledge of Hebrew reading, to enable the student to participate in religious services and to familiarize him with the Jewish way of life.

Furthermore, only a few hours—about four per week—were devoted to Jewish studies, and the teachers in most cases were very poorly equipped for their task. Many of the parents found this inadequate and looked for remedies.

The prototype of the Free School was established in Birmingham. In 1811, a Jewish Free School was opened in Westminster (London). This school, originally a Talmud Torah of the traditional type, was taken over by a group of Jewish philanthropists and turned into a general school for boys and girls. A similar school was opened in Manchester in 1838. In 1863 a Jewish school was opened in Stepney, in the East End of London, and three years later another was established in Bayswater in West London. Other schools of the same type were opened in South London in 1867. With the increase of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe, the Stepney School became the largest Jewish school in England with an enrollment of some 3,500 pupils. This school was also distinguished for its staff, which for a number of years included, among others, the famous Anglo-Jewish writer, Israel Zangwill.

The situation changed radically after 1880, when the compulsory education law came into effect. Educational authorities were created, whose function it was to establish schools in districts where they were lacking, or where the existing congregational schools could not accommodate all children of school age. A number of such new schools ultimately came into existence under the supervision of the government's Board of Education. As the con-

gregational, and among them the Jewish, schools were integrated into the public school system, the need arose for the provision of religious instruction. The Society for the Diffusion of Jewish Knowledge, in 1895, created a special Board to arrange for the religious instruction of Jewish children in the general school once or twice a week. The Board assigned Jewish teachers to the schools and met the expenses, as instruction was free of charge. The money came partly from the dues of members of the United Synagogue congregations and partly from donations. In 1912, 10,000 Jewish boys and girls in London received Jewish religious instruction through voluntary contributions under the auspices of the Board of Education.

As in the case of the Jewish Free Schools, the standard of Jewish religious instruction in the general schools was low; in consequence, dissatisfied parents sent their children to the heder or the Talmud Torah for additional instruction. With few exceptions, the English heder of the period was a poor imitation of its traditional prototype in Eastern Europe. The Jewish knowledge imparted was meager and failed to inspire children with a love of Judaism or desire to carry on the traditional way of life. Unlike those of Eastern Europe which were intended only for the poor, the Talmud Torahs in Great Britain were communal and open to all, though actually attendance was limited to children from lower and middle-class families.

The Zionist movement brought new life to Jewish education in Great Britain. The Liverpool Zionists opened an all-day school, providing both Jewish and secular education, with Dr. J. S. Fuchs (until 1903 editor of a Hebrew weekly in Cracow) as headmaster. Although his pupils numbered only some 150, the influence of the new Hebrew School was comparatively great, and some of its alumni subsequently became prominent in Jewish communal life. The school itself came to serve as a general model for other Jewish educational institutions.

Under the leadership of J.K. Goldbloom, a group of London Jews opened a reformed Talmud Torah in which the natural method of instruction in the Hebrew language was introduced. At the beginning of the present century, London had, apart from the Yeshivah Etz Hayyim (Tree of Life), a number of Talmud Torahs and a girls' school which were conducted in the new spirit. Even the old Free School now adopted the method of teaching Hebrew in Hebrew (*Ivrit be-Ivrit*). In 1906 the Talmud Torahs of London united into a Talmud Torah Trust under the chairmanship of Sir Samuel Montague. In 1939 the Trust comprised 19 such institutions with 2,285 pupils. Associated with the Trust was a board of education which set up a curriculum for all its schools, requiring two hours' instruction daily.

Due primarily to changed circumstances, the number of Talmud Torahs as well as students has in recent years suffered a decline. In the early years of the East European immigration, the new arrivals tended to concentrate mainly in the East End of London. With the improvement of their economic status, however, the Jews began to move to better residential sections, where they no longer constituted large aggregates but scattered groups. To take care of their religious and social needs, these groups established synagogues which also provided religious instruction for their children. In the course of this transition, however, the number of hours allotted to Jewish education was reduced to four or five per week. In content and spirit, this type of instruction has gradually approximated the Sunday School system of the Reform Jews.

Reduced to "Religious Classes," these schools are now united and financed from tuition fees, individual contributions and dues of synagogue members. In 1912 the Religious Classes in London had an enrollment of 2,000. In 1939 the Jewish school population in London was approximately 23,400, of which only 13,486, or 58 per-

cent, received some sort of Jewish education.

The same picture holds true for other cities of England. A survey of Jewish education in Manchester in 1927 showed that, with nearly 20,000 Jews, this city had the following facilities for Jewish education: a yeshivah, a Talmud Torah with several branches, seven Religious Classes, two Hebrew Schools and 36 private hadarim. Jewish instruction was also given in the Jewish Free School and in two general City Council schools. The instruction in most of the hadarim was of rather poor quality. Children of the age of twelve who had attended the school for a number of years could not yet read Hebrew properly. In the Talmud Torah the curriculum included translation of the Bible, the commentary of Rashi, Jewish history, Jewish laws and customs, and practice in Hebrew conversation. In the yeshivah the curriculum consisted of Bible, Talmud and Codes, Hebrew grammar and Jewish history; the medium of instruction was either Yiddish or English. In the City Council schools religious instruction, for about one hour daily, was given by teachers provided by the Central Board for Hebrew Education (founded in 1922). Altogether 1,445 Jewish children received Jewish instruction, while nearly 4,000 of school age received no Jewish school instruction whatsoever.

Apart from London and Manchester, the following cities have well-established Talmud Torahs: Belfast, Birmingham, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds, Newcastle, Preston and Sheffield. Jewish Free Schools exist in Leeds, Liverpool and London. These cities also offer religious instruction in the general schools. Furthermore, besides London and Manchester, there were also yeshivot in Liverpool, Gateshead (near Newcastle) and other cities. To their traditional curriculum they have recently added the study of Hebrew and of Jewish history.

The problem of securing qualified teachers for the Jewish schools has not been solved as yet. England has no Jewish teachers' college. Some of the graduates of

Jews' College, which is primarily a rabbinical seminary, turn to teaching if they cannot obtain a position as rabbi. Some Talmud Torahs, among them one in Manchester, have three-year teachers' training courses, upon the completion of which the student takes an examination at Jews' College. The requirements for the examination are: knowledge of the Pentateuch and the Prophets, Hebrew grammar, Jewish history and the Talmudic legends. In the academic year 1938-1939, 107 graduates of the courses took the examination, but most of them failed to pass.

After World War I there was a tendency to unite all Jewish educational institutions and bring them under systematic and competent supervision. To that end the Central Committee for Jewish Education was organized in London in 1920; its motto was: "A Jewish education for every Jewish child." The Committee undertook to grant financial aid and guidance to its constituent institutions, to train teachers and to publish appropriate textbooks. The executive director of the Committee, Herbert M. Adler, travelled from city to city, surveying the conditions in the various institutions and offering counsel and guidance.

In 1938-1939, with the intensification of anti-Jewish persecution in Central Europe, some 8,000 Jewish children from Austria and Germany were brought to England. The majority of these children were placed in non-Jewish homes, scattered throughout the towns and villages of England, Scotland and Wales. The Emergency Committee, set up shortly before the outbreak of World War II under the auspices of the Chief Rabbi, sent teachers to visit and instruct the children. Boys nearing Bar-Mitzvah age were given special instruction and supplied with Tefillin (phylacteries), prayer books and other books of Jewish content. However, the influence of the Christian homes prevailed. Gradually, a great many of these children began to forget the practices of their parental homes; they joined their hosts in worship at church, and not a few amongst them were baptized.

On the eve of World War II the evacuation of London's children began. The Joint Emergency Committee for the Religious Education of Jewish Children Evacuated from London established contact with children who were scattered in small groups throughout the country, and sent teachers to instruct them and conduct religious services for them. The non-Jewish population was very cooperative, the ministers encouraging the Jewish teachers in their work and putting the facilities of church schools at their disposal. In August 1940 the heavy air attacks on London began. Practically all children were evacuated from the city. Within the space of a few weeks, some 15,000 Jewish children left. The task of providing teachers for these children was truly formidable. Young male teachers had joined the armed forces, and the women, too, were largely engaged in war work. Nevertheless, the Committee provided religious education for 10,000 children and assisted in the establishment of hostels where the children could live in a Jewish atmosphere. The Committee also organized courses in various places for which it engaged special teachers. Contact with children was also maintained through correspondence courses. All told, the Committee maintained some 300 centers. In 1944 the children began to come back to London. The schools were in ruins, and the number of pupils had greatly declined. Despite all this the general attendance rose in the first half of 1944.

The war and the ensuing horrors aroused a deep Jewish consciousness. In Liverpool the number of students in the Jewish school has increased; the yeshivah has begun to prepare its students for the rabbinate. Glasgow possesses both a yeshivah and a Jewish secondary school which accept boys from the age of thirteen. In Manchester a majority of Jewish children between six and sixteen receive a rather thorough Jewish education. Marked progress has, moreover, been made in spreading the knowledge of Hebrew as a spoken language.

On the whole, the state of Jewish education in Great Britain is not unfavorable. In respect of the number of boys receiving a Jewish education, the situation in the British Isles is perhaps superior to that of other countries in which Jews enjoy full civic rights. It is estimated that some 90 percent of the boys receive some form of Jewish education. The number of girls receiving Jewish instruction continues to be rather small. The degree of knowledge which the average pupil absorbs is hardly sufficient for a genuine Jewish life. The Religious Classes established in the suburbs of the big cities, the new residential centers of British Jewry, accomplish little, since their aim is only to prepare the pupil for participation in worship in the synagogue. Parents who have attained a degree of economic prosperity are not too eager to burden their children with daily attendance at a Jewish school.

Against this it must be stressed that Jewish leaders have begun to pay ever greater attention to the need for Jewish education, and to make it the concern of the community. Committees have been formed in every city for the purpose of uniting the schools and establishing a uniform program of studies and a communal budget for the constituent schools. The Central Council for Jewish Religious Education has assembled the graduates of the Jewish schools and organized them into Bnei Torah groups for the purpose of maintaining Jewish contacts and interests. The movement to establish all-day schools has also reached Britain, and is now in its initial stages of development.

A new impulse to Jewish educational endeavor in Great Britain was given by the Education Act of 1944, which left wide scope for voluntary efforts in this field. In the fall of 1945, there was a conference of Jewish educators and laymen interested in education, at which it was decided to levy a school tax on all members of synagogues, so that educational institutions would no longer have to resort to campaigning for funds. This decision was supported by all

groupings in Jewish life in England, except the two extreme wings—Agudas Israel and the Liberals (the latter, followers of the Reform movement).

The rabbinical college of London had its beginnings in the Bet Hamidrash of the Ashkenazic community. When Dr. Nathan Adler (1803-1890) was appointed Chief Rabbi, he devoted considerable effort to the development of this school. In 1855 it was officially opened as Jews' College, with Sir Moses Montefiore as one of the trustees. Upon the death of Rabbi Nathan Adler, his son Hermann (1839-1911) became Chief Rabbi and president of the College. (The College's constitution provides that the Chief Rabbi must be its president, in order to ensure its perseverance in the Orthodox spirit.) The College expanded considerably and, in 1892, teachers' courses were introduced. An integral part of the University of London, the College has had such scholars on its faculty as Adolf Buechler (1867-1939), Israel Abrahams (1858-1925), Samuel Daiches (1878-1943) and Abraham Marmorstein (1882-1946).

## 2. CANADA

The beginnings of Jewish education in Canada are somewhat obscure. The number of Jews in the country before the end of the last century was small. As a rule, the Jewish children received their secular education in Protestant schools and their Jewish training from their fathers. The first Jewish school combining secular and Jewish studies was established in Montreal in 1887. This school did not succeed and was replaced by another, set up on a philanthropic basis by the Baron de Hirsch Foundation. It was supported by the Alliance Israélite Universelle, and in 1893 had 316 pupils, boys as well as girls. In 1896 Rabbi M. A. Ashinsky opened a Talmud Torah in Montreal which made rapid headway. In this school only Jewish studies were taught. Their secular education the Jewish children received in Protestant schools, for the Province of Quebec has no secular public school system. Instead, the

schools of Quebec—with its large Roman Catholic population of French origin—are based on a religious system, or rather two systems, one for Catholics and the other for Protestants. These systems are maintained by a school tax paid by every resident, with Catholics and Protestants paying into separate school funds. Canadians belonging to neither of these two Churches must nevertheless pay their tax to one or the other. Yet, such persons have no right to membership on the board of education, nor can they serve as teachers or officials in the schools. The Jews have concluded an agreement with the Protestants whereby they pay their tax to the Protestant school fund, in return for which the Jewish children may attend the Protestant schools. Thus, Jewish attendance is one on sufferance, not as of right. However, the Jewish pupils have the privilege of absenting themselves from classes on Jewish holidays, and their parents are entitled to demand the exemption of their children from the study of textbooks of missionary tendency.

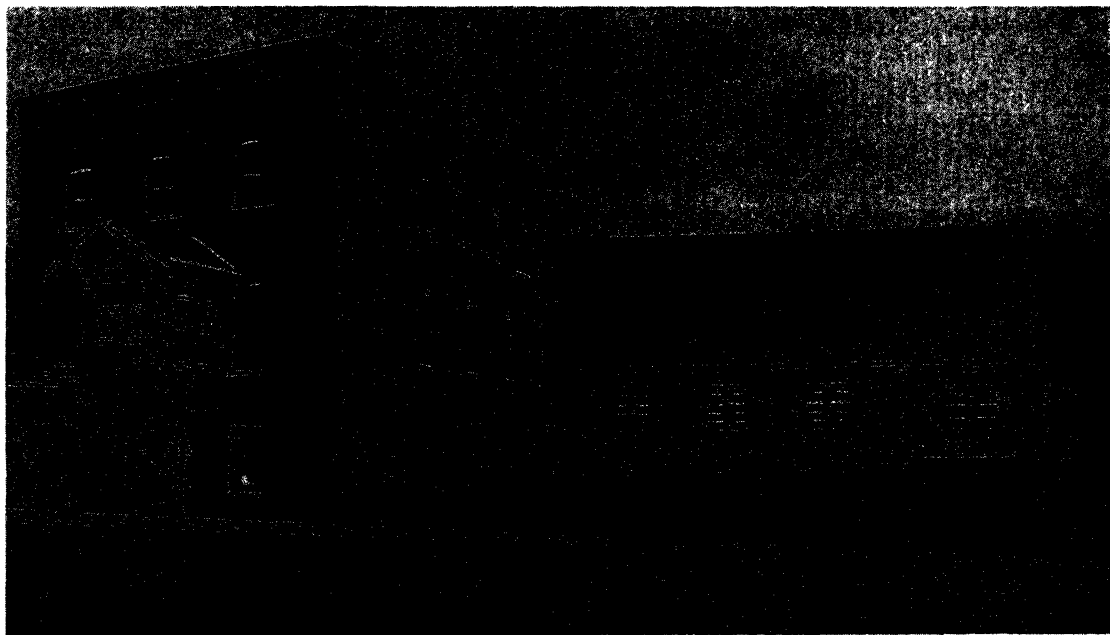
The majority of Jewish schools and Talmud Torahs in Canada are of the supplementary type, in which instruction is given in the afternoons and evenings. Recently, however, several all-day schools have been opened, whose curriculum includes both secular and religious studies. In spirit and tendency Canadian Jewish schools are of different types. There are the traditional Talmud Torahs conducted in the spirit of East European Orthodoxy, in which the Scriptures and other sacred texts are translated into Yiddish. On the other hand, there are Talmud Torahs pervaded with the spirit of the Jewish revival, in which the language of instruction is Hebrew, and in which Palestine occupies a prominent place in the curriculum. Then, there is the Folkshul, established by the Poale Zion, in which both Hebrew and Yiddish are taught. This school attempts to foster respect for the Jewish mode of life, love for Palestine, and the conceptions of social justice and democracy. While some Yiddish schools

regard Hebrew as the medium of present-day Jewish creativity and Palestine as the place of Jewish national revival, others have adopted the extreme Yiddishist outlook of the secularist Jewish Labor Party, the "Bund."

At the beginning these ideological lines of demarcation were sharp and clear-cut, but in the course of time they have become somewhat obliterated. The new life has had a leveling effect upon the Jewish community; it has led to a similarity in habit and community of feeling. The common denominator of almost all these schools, from the pedagogical point of view, is their appreciation of the rights of the child and its needs, and their adjustment of pedagogical means to attain these ends.

ing secular with religious or purely Jewish-national studies. This development was the result of a growing conviction that the supplementary school was not adequate to assure the survival of Jewish values. Despite initial fears that they would be charged with segregational tendencies, the new schools have proved to be educationally so successful that such apprehensions have largely disappeared.

The following figures give an idea of the composition of forces in Jewish education in Montreal, the largest Jewish center of Canada. In 1944 the number of pupils in all Talmud Torahs (including the Central Talmud Torah with well over 1,000 pupils) was 1,668, in other Orthodox schools, including two yeshivot, 344, in the Sunday



PERETZ SCHOOL IN WINNIPEG, CANADA

Among Canadian Jewry, the role of the Sunday School is insignificant. The Reform movement sponsoring this type of school has not yet taken root in Canada. However, there are indications that the acculturation of Canada's Jews will bring an increase in the number of Sunday Schools.

In recent years, there has been a growth in the number of all-day schools combin-

Schools of Reform Congregations 557, in the Folkshuln 795, in the Peretz Schools (Yiddishist, with a little Hebrew in the curriculum) 450, in the Workmen's Circle School 45, and in the Morris Vintchefsky School (International Workers Order) 195. The Central Talmud Torah has its own building (completed in 1931 at a cost of \$250,000), which is also the center of the



Jewish youth movement. Attached to this Talmud Torah is an all-day Hebrew secondary school with 400 pupils who receive both religious and secular instruction. Montreal also has a Hebrew Teachers College and a seminary for teachers in the Folkshuln. These institutions are supported by the Canadian Jewish Congress.

The Folkshul-organization (founded in 1914) opened an all-day school in 1928 which in 1944 had 310 pupils and 20 teachers. The Peretz School, established in 1913 by the Poale Zion, later came under the control of the Yiddishists. In the beginning, classes were conducted once a week; now instruction is given daily. The school also has a secondary department with a curriculum comprising Jewish history, Yiddish language and literature, Jewish demography, the history of the class struggle, and Hebrew. To this, in 1940, was added an all-day school of seven grades, which now has about 100 pupils. The progress made by the Orthodox schools is also notable. From 1944 to 1947, the number of students in only three of these institutions rose from 669 to 1,033.

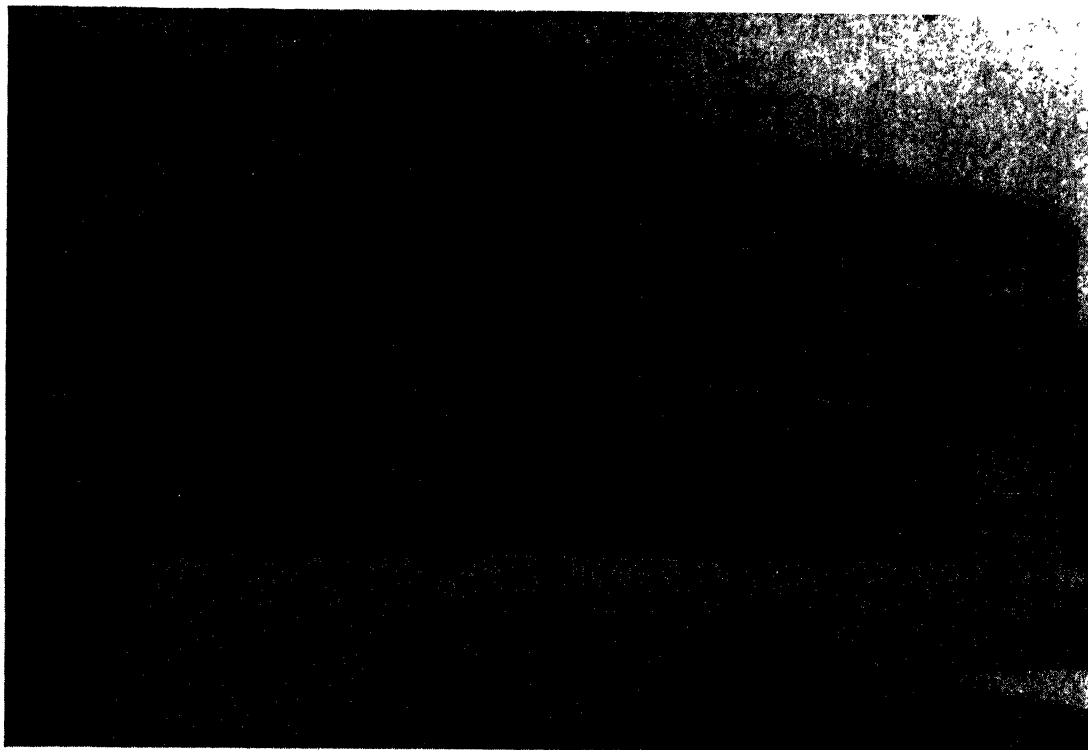
On the whole, about 60 percent of all Jewish children of school age in Canada receive some form of Jewish education, whereas in the United States the percentage is only 25. The Jewish community in Canada, which is considerably younger, manifests a higher degree of folk vitality.

The situation in Toronto is similar to that of Montreal. The first Talmud Torah there was established in 1907. In 1916 strictly orthodox immigrants from Poland established the Talmud Torah Etz Hayyim, which ten years later numbered nearly 300 students, some of whom attained a high degree of Talmudic scholarship. The Toronto Hebrew Free School, conducted in the modern national spirit, has its own building (completed in 1922) and serves as a center for the United Talmud Torahs. In this central school more than 800 children receive their Jewish education. It commences in the Beth Haseked (Child's House) between the ages of three and a

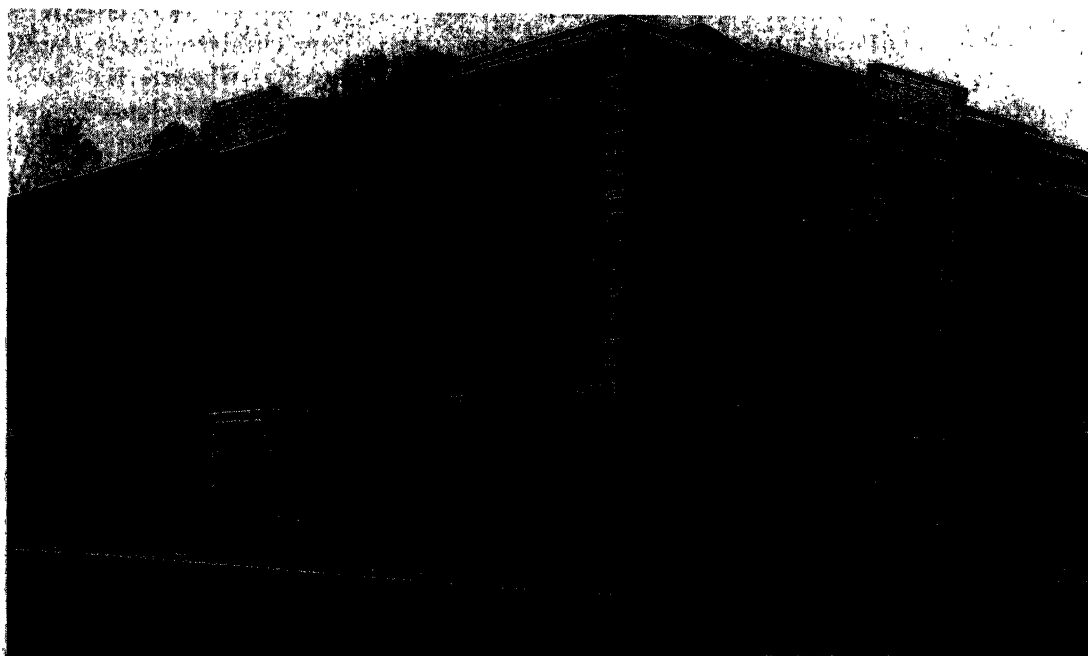
half to five; from there the way leads to the kindergarten, and then to the all-day school or the Talmud Torah—for those who want to obtain their secular education in the Protestant schools. In 1946 the Central Talmud Torah had 434 pupils, the all-day school 143, the other Talmud Torahs 1,078, the Etz Hayyim Yeshivah had 493 pupils in 1944, the various Yiddish schools (Folkshuln, Borochov School, Workmen's Circle School, Workmen's League School, and others) 802, the Sunday Schools 701. A number of children attended hadarim. All Jewish schools accounted for 3,580 pupils, that is, about 50 per cent of the Jewish children of school age in Toronto were receiving some form of Jewish education.

Jewish immigration to Western Canada on an appreciable scale did not begin until the twentieth century. At present there are a score of Jewish communities between Port Arthur and Vancouver. Every one of these young communities has educational institutions of considerable standing. The state of Jewish education in Western Canada is in some respects even better than in the Eastern provinces. The majority of children attend the Jewish schools for five or six years; the educational attainments of the schools are satisfactory. In some communities 90 percent of all Jewish children of school age receive a Jewish education. The keen interest in Jewish education may be due partly to the fact that the various ethnic groups living in those areas are eager to preserve their language and cultural identity, although English is the official language and Anglo-Saxon culture comparatively the most influential.

In 1944 there were in Winnipeg 2,194 Jewish children between the ages of six and fourteen, 50 percent of whom attended Jewish schools. Several types of schools exist in Winnipeg: a Talmud Torah with several branches and a total enrollment of some 600 pupils, a Peretz School with two branches and an enrollment of about 500, a Folkshul (established by the Poale Zion) and a Sholem Aleichem School—a radical Yiddishist institution with some 130



JEWISH PEOPLE'S SCHOOLS IN MONTREAL, CANADA



CENTRAL TALMUD TORAH IN MONTREAL, CANADA

pupils. A number of children attend hadarim, and some receive private instruction at home. The Jewish educational system in Winnipeg includes three all-day schools—one Hebrew, maintained by the Talmud Torah, and two Yiddish, maintained by the Peretz School and the Folkshul. The Talmud Torah also has a secondary department. Every year three or four of its graduates are sent to Rabbinical seminaries or teachers' colleges to complete their education.

Far from satisfactory, however, is the state of Jewish education in the small Jewish settlements in Canada. About 2,000 Jewish children are to be found in communities with a few Jewish families, which have no Jewish educational facilities at all. These children grow up without a Jewish education and are becoming totally alienated from Jewish life.

The Canadian Jewish Congress aids Jewish education financially and otherwise. In 1942 the Canadian Association of Hebrew Schools was established for the purpose of uniting all educational institutions, improving their curricula, and extending supervisory guidance to them. On the whole, those engaged in Jewish educational activities in Canada—teachers as well as school boards—are pervaded with a spirit of national idealism which imparts a dynamic quality to their work.

### 3. SOUTH AFRICA

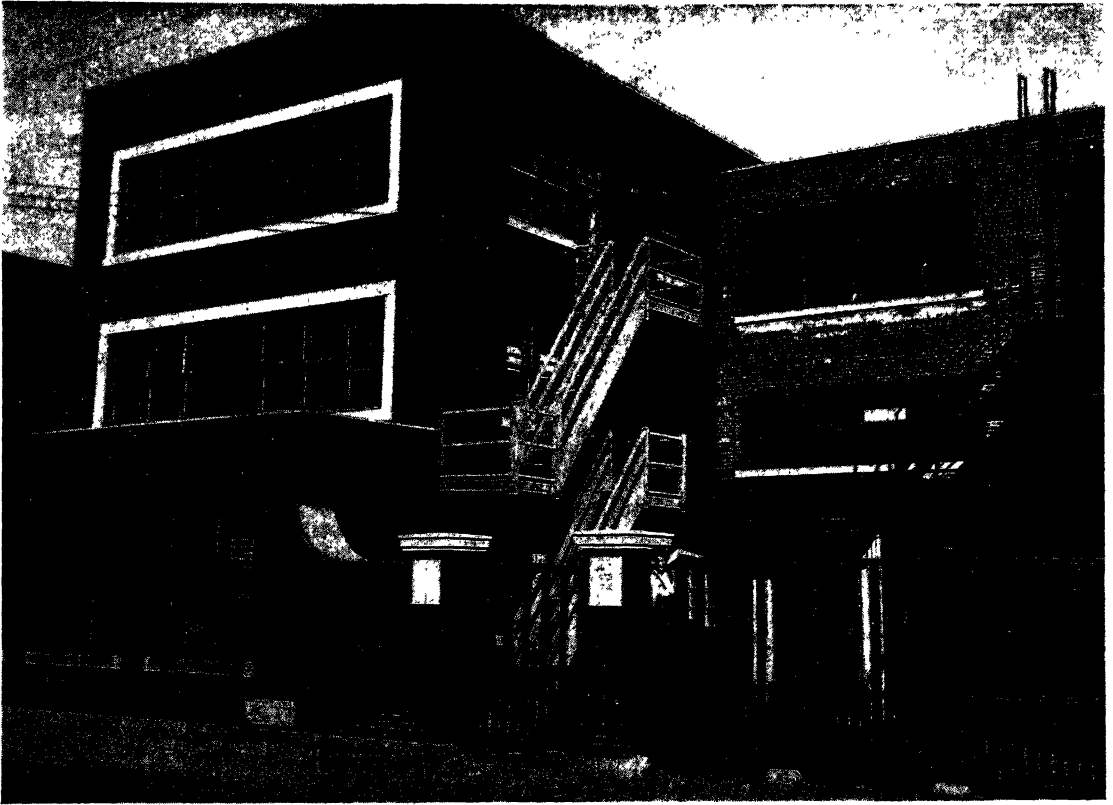
Over 100,000 Jews live in the Union of South Africa. The two biggest communities are Johannesburg and Capetown, the former the largest Jewish community, the other the oldest in the country. The greater part of the Jews in South Africa came from Lithuania, and remained deeply attached to the Jewish tradition. The number of West European Jews in South Africa was never large, so that Jewish assimilationist ideologies never gained ground. Even third-generation Jews are not estranged from Judaism, although their Jewish knowledge is meager. They evince great interest in all

things Jewish, particularly in events in Palestine.

Jewish education in South Africa displays many of the features of Jewish education in the countries in which Anglo-Saxon culture is dominant. Jewish children receive their secular education in the general school, and their Jewish education in the Jewish supplementary school which they attend for an hour or two in the afternoon. Some of these institutions bear the traditional name "Talmud Torah." Here, Jewish education suffers from all the shortcomings of the supplementary school, in which attendance is not compulsory, and which cannot infringe too much on the pupil's time, since in all educational matters the public school comes first.

It is estimated that the public schools are attended by 19,000 Jewish pupils (about 14,000 on the elementary and 4,000 on the secondary level). All Jewish schools together have an enrollment of some 4,000 pupils. Of these, 700 are scattered throughout small and remote communities, where the functions of the rabbi are combined with those of cantor, shohet and teacher. If we add to this figure several hundred pupils receiving private instruction, the total is still less than 5,000. But children attend public school for 12 years, whereas the Jewish school only requires his attendance for four. This means that the turnover in Jewish schools is much greater.

In 1920 energetic measures were taken to improve Jewish education in South Africa. On the initiative of the Zionist Federation and the Board of Jewish Deputies, a Board of Education was established in Johannesburg and in Capetown. In recent years, several projects were initiated to raise the level of education. In Capetown an all-day school has been established. In Johannesburg in 1944, a Jewish hostel was founded for Jewish students from provincial towns where no Jewish education is obtainable. Also a School of Jewish Studies has been opened there, including a teachers department.



JEWISH PERETZ SCHOOLS IN MONTREAL, CANADA

In 1940 there were some 120 Jewish schools in South Africa; among them there were only 15, however, with an enrollment of over 100. The rest were small schools, with an insignificant enrollment. Although the curriculum of the Jewish school is based upon an eight-year course, only 15 percent of all those that enter the school reach the upper grades. The parents are satisfied with a minimum of Jewish education, the culmination of which is the Bar-Mitzvah celebration.

Part of the Jewish youth is enlisted in national Jewish youth organizations. The Habonim and Habonot together have a membership of some 5,000. There is also an educational foundation which enables young Jewish men and women to go to Palestine to study. In 1946, 30 young people were sent to Palestine for that purpose.

In 1928 a Yiddish Folkshul was founded in Johannesburg by the Yiddish Literary

Association, with an attendance of 70 boys and girls. After a setback, due to the general economic crisis, the Yiddish school was re-established in 1936. It now comprises a kindergarten with 60 children and courses on a secondary school level. Since 1947 it has had its own building.

#### 4. AUSTRALIA

The total number of Jews living in Australia is less than 30,000. The young community has been hampered in its development mainly by its geographic isolation from world Jewry. With the rapid progress of the means of communication, this isolation diminished and the Jewish community took on a new lease of life. Immigrants from the East European Jewish centers joined the older settlers of Anglo-Jewish stock. In consequence, almost all educational trends in the larger Jewish communities throughout the British Com-

monwealth found expression in Australia, too.

The first Jewish school in Australia can be traced as far back as 1848, when the tiny Jewish congregation of Melbourne (today the second largest Jewish center on the Australian continent) established a school and appointed a teacher to instruct some twenty boys and girls in Hebrew. His successor was a political refugee from Poland—Moses Rintel—who later became the founder of the first Reform congregation in the Southern Hemisphere.

In 1873 the Jews of Melbourne established a day school of the parochial type. Not until secular education in non-denominational schools had become compulsory in the State of Victoria, was the Melbourne school closed.

Since 1848 the Jewish population of Melbourne has risen to 6,000. At present, its United Jewish Education Board supervises a network of schools which range from a Talmud Torah of the familiar pattern to the Bialik Hebrew School, imbued with the spirit of the modern Hebraistic revival. Even Yiddish has in recent years become a medium of instruction in the capital of Victoria. In 1935 the "Melbourne Evening and Sunday Courses" were launched, at first only for children, but later also for adults. This institution has since then served as a center of education in the Yiddishist, secularist spirit. The number of children attending the Melbourne Yiddish School has, moreover, risen from 20 in 1936 to 106 in 1942.

A 1942 survey conducted among the younger generation by Melbourne's Jewish National Library "Kadimah," showed that the Jewish educational experiments in that city had borne fruit and that there was a body of young men and women who were familiar with both Hebrew and Yiddish literature.

Sydney, with nearly 50 percent of the total Jewish population of Australia, established its first Jewish school within a few years of the earlier one in Melbourne. Another, the Jewish Sabbath School, was founded in 1863. Since 1882 the Jewish community in Sydney has had its own Jewish Board of Education. One of its most important functions is to provide Jewish religious instruction in the general schools of New South Wales. Sydney Jewry also maintains a Talmud Torah and a Hebrew day school. As in other cities, including Melbourne, there are adult circles for the study of Talmud and Midrash, and also youth organizations fostering a knowledge of modern Hebrew and Hebrew literature.

A number of smaller Jewish congregations scattered throughout the continent make such provisions as they can for the religious education of their young, for in all of Australia except New South Wales no religious instruction of any type is permitted in state schools. Thus Brisbane has its own Board of Education; Newcastle, a Hebrew school; and in Perth, Western Australia, there is the Jewish Education Association, which provides Jewish tuition for over 100 children. In Adelaide, 50 Jewish children are given religious instruction.

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# EDUCATION IN PALESTINE IN MODERN TIMES

Zevi Scharfstein

- I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
- II. THE OLDER SYSTEM OF EDUCATION
- III. THE NEW EDUCATION
- IV. THE BATTLE OF LANGUAGES
- V. AFTER THE BALFOUR DECLARATION
- VI. TRENDS IN JEWISH EDUCATION
- VII. THE SPREAD OF EDUCATION
- VIII. PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS
- IX. AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION
- X. THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY

## I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Jewish community in Palestine, consisting of Sephardic, North African and Ashkenazic Jews, was in a very backward state. The Ashkenazim themselves were divided between the followers of the Gaon of Wilno (Prushim), and those of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem (Hasidim). Separated by differences of tradition, custom and even language, these groups failed to understand each other's problems, with ensuing communal dissension and strife.

The Jewish population was very small, rising and falling in the cities of Jerusalem, Safed, Tiberias, Hebron, Jaffa and Haifa, in accordance with political developments outside Palestine and the oppressiveness of local taxation. Upon his first visit in 1827, Sir Moses Montefiore found some fifty Sephardic and forty Ashkenazic families in Jerusalem—all living in destitution. The Ashkenazic congregation had a Talmud Torah—but without permanent teachers—in a room assigned by the communal authorities near the Bet ha-Midrash (house of study); the members of the congregation

each devoted one hour daily to teaching the children. With the subsequent increase of the Ashkenazim in Jerusalem, the communal authorities appointed regular teachers to the Talmud Torah, as well as a supervisor to visit the school and to examine the pupils.

Upon settling in Palestine, Rabbi Samuel Salant (1816-1909) of Bialystok, Russia, established for Ashkenazic Jews in Jerusalem (1847) the yeshivah Etz Hayyim (Tree of Life) in the Hurvah courtyard linked with the name of Rabbi Judah ha-Hasid. The curriculum of this yeshivah was fairly inclusive, ranging from the alphabet to a study of the Halakah Codes. The more gifted pupils were in due course transferred from the primary grades to the yeshivah proper, to pursue the study of the Talmud; those unadapted for higher study were apprenticed to artisans. In 1885 the Hasidim established a similar institution, the Talmud Torah Háyé Olam (Life Eternal) in the part of the town known as the Old City. The previous year, in 1884, a Talmud Torah was opened in the suburb Meah Shearim by Jews from Hungary. As to the Sephardim, they had already established a Talmud Torah in the Old City in 1845. However, owing to the poverty of the Sephardic congregation, this institution was forced to close in 1861 and the Sephardic children remained without communal provision for education, except for a few who received instruction in private hadarim. Rabbi Joshua Leib Diskin, who came to Jerusalem from Brest-Litovsk, in 1887, established a special educational institution for orphans, which is still in existence.

Talmud Torahs as well as yeshivot existed in Safed, Tiberias and Hebron. In 1905, with the rise of the Jewish population in Jaffa, a Talmud Torah Shaare Torah (Gates of Torah) was established there, which included in its curriculum arithmetic and Hebrew grammar.

All the larger of the above-enumerated educational institutions are still in existence. The yeshivah Etz Hayyim has twelve branches in various sections of Jerusalem. In recent years (since 1933), Agudat Yisrael, with its wide educational experience in Poland and other countries, has extended its educational activities to Palestine. This strictly orthodox organization has opened several Talmud Torahs, as well as schools for girls under the general name Bet Yaakov which, in 1945, included 12 kindergartens, 17 elementary schools, 3 secondary schools and 3 women-teachers' colleges. The Talmud Torahs Netsah Yisrael (The Eternal One of Israel), established in several colonies by the Jews of Frankfort-on-the-Main, were also part of the older system of education, although slightly more modernized and using Hebrew as the language of instruction. The language of instruction in the Bet Yaakov schools is likewise Hebrew.

## II. THE OLDER SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

The pupil enters the Talmud Torah at the age of four and begins the study of the alphabet, in accordance with the tradition of the heder. (In recent years, singing and dramatic activities have been introduced in the lower grades). On acquiring the alphabet, the pupil is initiated in the study of Humash (Pentateuch), by the method of verse by verse translation into Yiddish. Having acquired a certain familiarity with the Humash, he is introduced, at a still tender age, to the study of the Talmud.

The Talmud teacher reads a passage from some Talmudic treatise, explains it in Yiddish, and the pupils repeat it aloud. The hours of study are from morning to evening, with an intermission for lunch.

Thursdays are devoted to the study of the Pentateuch together with the commentary of Rashi. Thursdays and Fridays are examination days, when the pupils are tested in their week's work. Secular subjects are not taught, with the exception of the elements of arithmetic, for which a special teacher is engaged. Completing the course of study in the Talmud Torah at the age of thirteen or thereabouts, the pupils acquire a knowledge of two or three tractates of the Talmud. Most Talmud Torahs maintain dining rooms, where the pupils take their meals, supplied free to the children of the poor. The teachers in these Talmud Torahs are lacking in professional training and, for the most part, in practical experience. They are generally chosen from among the older yeshivah students, acquiring the technique of teaching the hard way—by trial and error.

After the Talmud Torah there is the junior yeshivah. This institution is intended for boys over 12 years as a preparatory division for the senior yeshivah. Here the elementary teacher is replaced by the rosh metivta (principal) and his aides who lecture on the Talmud for an hour or two daily. The rest of the day the students spend in supervised study. In the junior yeshivah, the curriculum consists of Talmud only. The language of instruction is Yiddish. Some of these schools have dormitories and dining halls. The student generally completes his course in the junior yeshivah at the age of 16 or 17. The above-average student is then able to read Talmud at sight and to discuss intelligently the interpretations of the commentators. Most Talmud Torahs and junior yeshivot are branches of senior yeshivot, all of which are generally housed under the same roof.

In addition to those already mentioned, there are a number of yeshivot in Palestine fostering particular trends of Jewish tradition, as for instance, those carrying on the traditions of Talmudic scholarship of old Russia or old Hungary. The Hasidic tradition is represented in yeshivot founded by

the disciples of the rebbes of Ger, Sadagora and Lubavitch. The traditional Jewish philosophy of education prevails in all the yeshivot. (See special article on Traditional Jewish education.) However, after World War I, a number of yeshivot in the modern spirit were founded, the best known of which is the Merkaz Harav (The Rabbi's Center), established in 1920 by Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook. Here the language of instruction is Hebrew and the curriculum includes Jewish philosophy and ethics as well as Palestinography. The yeshivah Hayishuv Hehadash (New Community), established in 1938 in Tel Aviv, even includes secular studies in its curriculum.

Upon the invasion of Poland and Lithuania in World War II, students from these countries escaped to Palestine and re-established their yeshivot in the names of their native towns, such as Mir, Ponevej, Lomza and Nowogrodek.

It is estimated that there are today in Palestine some hundred and twenty Talmud Torahs, junior and senior yeshivot, giving instruction to some ten thousand students, with a teaching and supervisory personnel of over five hundred. The total annual budget of these institutions is \$2,500,000. Their main income is derived from contributions by individuals in Palestine and abroad, chiefly in the United States. The Vaad Hayeshivot (Committee of the Yeshivot) and Mifeal Hatorah (Torah Action), are the Palestine agencies supervising the activities of the yeshivot.

### III. THE NEW EDUCATION

In the course of numerous visits to Palestine, Sir Moses Montefiore, impressed by the prevailing poverty, had sought to improve economic conditions by means of systematic education and vocational training. However, strong opposition on the part of the community, and particularly of the heads of the Kolelim (philanthropic agencies established along the lines of *landmanshaftn*), necessitated the abandonment of these ideas.

The first to succeed in establishing a modern educational institution in Palestine was the well-known poet Ludwig August Frankl (1810-1894), who was in charge of the archives of the Jewish community in Vienna. Frankl came to Jerusalem in 1856, on behalf of Elise von Hertz-Laemel, to establish a new educational institution dedicated to her father's memory. Accorded a hearty welcome by the Sephardim, his institution encountered the antagonism of the Ashkenazim, despite all his assurances that he had no intention of undermining the old faith. The institution was opened under the patronage of the Austrian Consul and soon became an important factor in the new education. Eight years later, in 1864, the Rothschilds of London established a vocational girls' school in Jerusalem. Charles Netter, the representative of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, founded near Jaffa in 1870 the agricultural school Mikveh Yisrael, which has since trained two generations of agriculturists. After the Russian pogroms of 1881, the Alliance decided to expand its activities in Palestine and established a vocational school in Jerusalem. Nisim Behar, principal of the school, succeeded in winning back a number of Jewish pupils among destitute families, who were attending Christian missionary schools.

Actually, the new education began with the spread of the Hibbat Zion idea and the establishment of the new colonies. Israel Belkind, an early BILU leader, opened a private school in Jaffa in 1890 for the children of new settlers, with Hebrew as the language of instruction. Though supported by the Hovevei Zion Committee in Odessa, the school met with financial difficulties due to the poverty of the settlers, and in 1893 the Parents' Association requested the Alliance to take over the institution. This development precipitated a conflict between the Hovevei Zion Committee and the Alliance. In the Alliance schools the language as well as the whole spirit of instruction was French; the Hovevei Zion insisted upon Hebrew as the medium of



instruction. A compromise was reached by which the institution was divided into a boys' and girls' school, the former taken over fully by the Alliance, the latter by the Hovevei Zion Committee. (This girls' school subsequently played a prominent role in national Jewish education.) The spirit of national education also made its way into the settlements. In Rishon le-Zion, the colony established in 1882 and supported by Baron Edmond Rothschild, some of the teachers introduced Hebrew as the language of tuition. Rishon le-Zion was also the home of the first kindergarten in Palestine. In 1902, upon the initiative of David Yellin and Isaiah Press, the B'nai B'rith established a Hebrew kindergarten in Jerusalem. This kindergarten was instrumental both in spreading Hebrew and in uniting the various Jewish groups in Jerusalem, among whom not less than thirteen different languages and dialects were current. Among other highly influential figures in popularizing Hebrew as a spoken language in Palestine were Eliezer Ben Yehudah (1858-1921), Yehiel Mikel Pines (1842-1931), Dr. Yitzhak Epstein and David Yudelovitch.

With the establishment of new settlements, the number of Jewish schools and teachers increased. In 1902 the Hebrew Teachers Organization in Palestine was founded, with the following aims: (1) to improve the state of education and to impart to all schools a national Jewish character; (2) to revive the Hebrew language and to watch over the Jewish spirit in the schools; and (3) to improve the economic conditions of the teachers. In 1907 the Central Organization of Teachers prepared a detailed program of studies for the elementary school (an eight-year course), comprising: Bible, liturgy, Hebrew, general science, arithmetic, elementary geometry, Palestinography, geography, history, French and Arabic (beginning with the fifth grade), drawing, singing, physical and manual training. This program linked all the 24 modern schools in the country into one system. The Teachers Organization

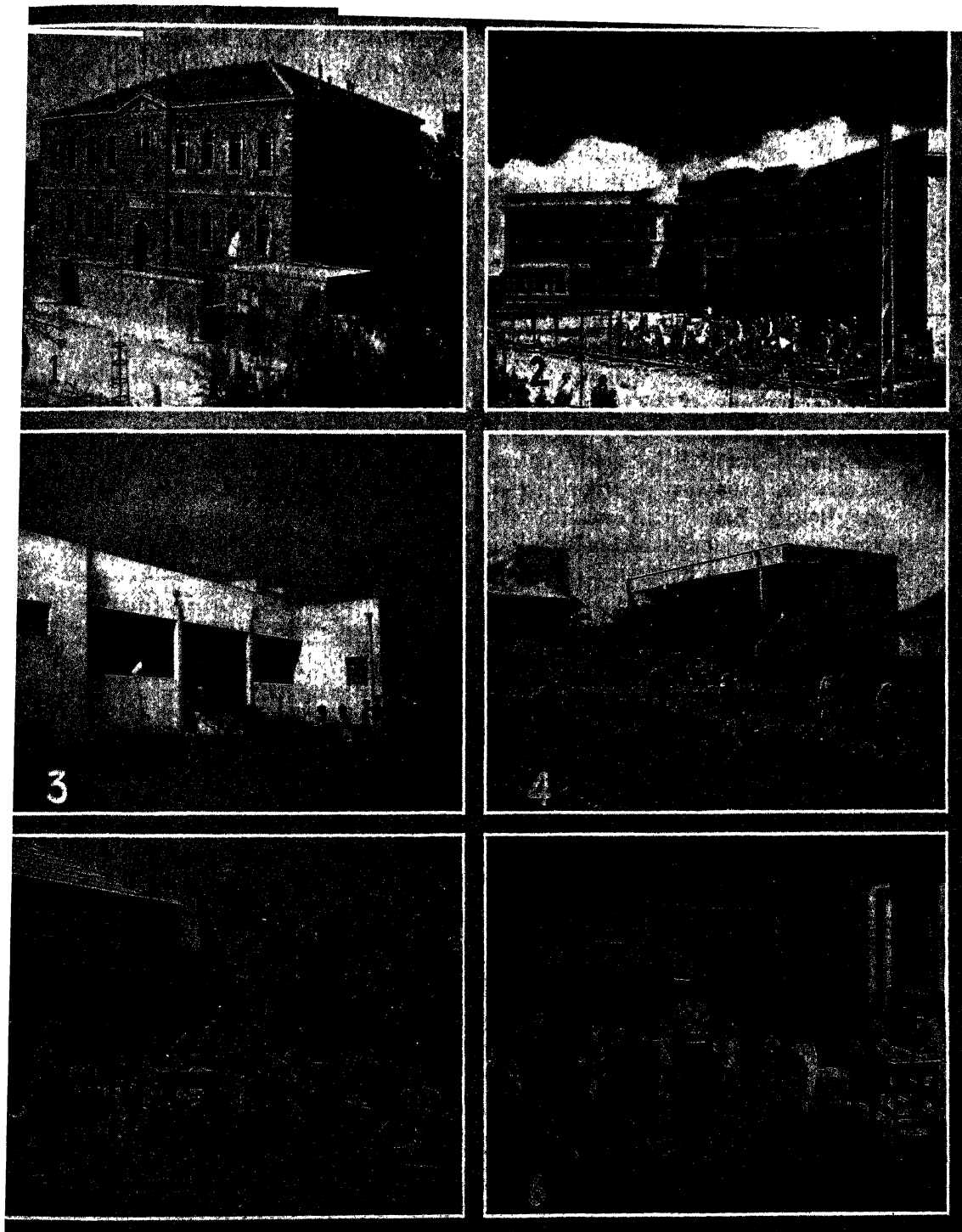
also appointed a Language Committee (Vaad Halashon) to work out a terminology for textbooks.

Besides the educational institutions of the older type and the modern schools already described, there were other special types of schools. In the cities (Jerusalem, Jaffa, Safed, Tiberias) the schools were generally under the influence of the Alliance; in the colonies these were subsidized by Baron Edmond de Rothschild, whose representatives endeavored to rear the younger generation in a French atmosphere. The Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden opened schools oriented toward German culture, but featuring Hebrew in the curriculum.

The beginnings of secondary education date from 1905, when Dr. Yehudah Leib Meitman opened his Hebrew High School in Jaffa. This school (now named Herzliah and located in Tel Aviv) was not merely an institution of secondary education and a model for other similar schools, but also a center of diffusion of the national culture. More secondary schools were opened in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa and Petah Tikva. In 1903 the Hilfsverein opened a teachers' seminary at the Laemel school, in which the language of instruction was German.

#### IV. THE BATTLE OF LANGUAGES

On visiting Palestine in 1907, Dr. Paul Nathan, one of the Hilfsverein leaders, recommended the establishment of a higher technical institution in Haifa to train technologists for the rapidly developing East. In no financial position to launch this enterprise by itself, the Hilfsverein appealed to Jewish philanthropists in Russia, the United States and elsewhere to aid in securing the necessary funds. A Board of Trustees was established, consisting of the leaders of the Hilfsverein, contributors from various countries, and three representatives of the Executive of the Zionist Organization: Shmaryah Levin, Ahad Haam and Yehiel Tschlenoff. The Jewish National Fund gave the Board of Trustees a tract of land in Haifa as a site for the projected building. When this school, later



*Courtesy Keren Hayesod, Jerusalem*

JEWISH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN PALESTINE: 1. THE LAEMEL SCHOOL IN JERUSALEM; 2. SCHOOL IN TEL NORDAU, TEL AVIV; 3. SCHOOL IN KFAR MALAL; 4. SCHOOL IN GIVAT HASHLOSHAH; 5. CHILDREN'S ORCHESTRA IN ASHDOT YAAKOV; 6. KINDERGARTEN IN EIN HAROD

the Hebrew Technical College, was about to open its doors, it became known that the Hilfsverein had decided, at a session of the Board of Trustees in 1913, to make German temporarily the language of instruction, with Hebrew as the medium for only one or two required subjects. This decision was received with great indignation in Palestine and abroad. The Zionist representatives on the Board resigned in protest, and the Battle of Languages was joined. The teachers in the Hilfsverein schools and its teachers' seminary vainly requested that German be replaced by Hebrew. On December 10, 1913, all Jewish teachers in these schools resigned, and a majority of the pupils enrolled in newly opened schools. In connection with these events, the Hebrew Education Committee was established, and thus the foundation was laid for a Hebrew educational system.

#### V. AFTER THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

After the Balfour Declaration and with the occupation of Palestine by the British army and the Jewish Legion, a new spirit pervaded the country. The British authorities closed all German schools, including those of the Hilfsverein. The buildings of the Hilfsverein's two Jerusalem schools, as well as those of the technical school and college in Haifa, were transferred to the Zionist Organization. The Hebrew Education Committee, which became a part of the Palestine Office, took over all schools formerly assisted by the Zionist Organization and opened several new ones. Thus all Jewish schools in Jerusalem, except those of the older type and the boys' and girls' schools of the Alliance, came under the control of the Hebrew Education Committee. In Tiberias the pupils left the Alliance school and entered the Hebrew school. At that time, a Zionist delegation from London, authorized by the British Government to lay the foundation for the Jewish National Home, organized a Hebrew Education Committee for the entire country.

The Palestine Government's Education Department, established in 1920, granted autonomy to the Jewish educational system. With respect to state aid, however, the schools in this system were placed in the category of private institutions, owing to their refusal to come under the control of the government. Such control, it was feared, would have placed them on a level with the Arab schools, whose educational standards were minimal. The main function of the Department, therefore, became the education of the Arabs.

The development of the Jewish school system in the first few years after the Balfour Declaration is shown in the following Table:

TABLE 1  
DEVELOPMENT OF JEWISH SCHOOLS  
IN PALESTINE

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Number of Schools</i>	<i>Number of Teachers</i>	<i>Number of Pupils</i>
1920-1921	135	523	12,830
1921-1922	131	571	12,466
1922-1923	118	497	11,962
1926-1927	194	742	18,593

The decline, in the early twenties, in the number of schools was due to the fact that the Zionist Organization was occasionally constrained for lack of funds to drop some schools from its system. In 1931 this system comprised 265 schools. As a result of the world-wide depression of that time, the budget of the Education Committee was reduced. The administration of Jewish education was then transferred by the Jewish Agency to the Vaad Leumi (National Council) with the provision that it would receive an annual Agency grant of £30,000 for the first three years.

The larger settlements cover their own educational budgets, as in the case of the municipality of Tel Aviv, which has its own department of education, school supervision and similar services. However, all these schools are part of a single system under the control of the National Council. In the curriculum of the schools within the system, Jewish subjects, and particularly

Bible study, occupy a central position. Hebrew speech in the mouth of the pupils has become a natural and flexible medium of expression. General subjects receive about the same degree of attention as in the modern school systems of other countries.

## VI. TRENDS IN JEWISH EDUCATION

In the national Jewish education system (which does not include the institutions of the older type or of the extreme orthodox Agudat Yisrael) there are three discernible trends. These are represented in the three types of school: General, Mizrahi (conservative-religious), and Histadrut (Labor) which had previously been independent, but later joined the system (in 1926). Each type of school is fostered by an autonomous organization with its own curriculum and supervision. However, they are all united in the Department of Education, under one and the same Director.

The difference between the General and the Mizrahi schools consists in the greater amount of time the latter devote to the study of the Talmud which, on the elementary level, begins with the fourth year. These schools, furthermore, require conformity to the Jewish traditional way of life on the part of both teacher and pupil. The general schools, too, teach the liturgy and religious practices, and some even conduct religious services. But they leave the matter of individual religious observance to the discretion of the parents. The Mizrahi schools devote about one-half of the school hours to religious education, whereas the general schools assign only about one-fifth of their time to it. In the Mizrahi schools the main subject in the lower grades is the Pentateuch, and in the upper grades the Talmud. The object is to familiarize the graduate of the elementary school (in an eight-year course) with some hundred and fifty pages of Talmud and enable him to read an easy passage at sight. The main emphasis in the Mizrahi schools is placed upon the Jewish religious

spirit, and the school day begins with the religious service. Mizrahi schools also have their own textbooks, compiled in the spirit of the organization.

The educational program of the Histadrut schools was formulated by a pedagogical committee of the Merkaz Hahinnuk (Educational Center of the Histadrut). The following are its main principles: (1) to strengthen the pupil's attachment to his people and to the ethical and cultural heritage of Judaism through a knowledge of Israel's past, its unceasing creative efforts, and its present struggle for survival; and to imbue him with an awareness of the common destiny which binds Jews in Palestine to those in the Diaspora; (2) to instill a love of the country's natural features, and to prepare him morally and physically for participation in the upbuilding of the Land of Israel, in general, and in the development of Jewish agriculture based upon individual labor, in particular; (3) to impart to him the values animating Palestine's labor movement and a realization of his own stake in its future; to awaken the desire to establish a new and just social order without exploitation and class distinctions; (4) to make him conscious of the significance of the labor movement in Zionism and to develop the ability to apply the halutz ideal in his every-day life; (5) to implant an awareness that the fostering of a spirit of brotherhood between the Jewish labor movement and the Arab working masses is one of the ways of advancing international unity amongst all workers and of promoting the universal brotherhood of man; (6) to develop him physically for a life of labor and industry; (7) to engender a love of work and a realization of its dignity; (8) to implant a striving for constant self-perfection; (9) to develop an esthetic sense and artistic ability inspired by the mode of life of the people, by the search for truth and simplicity of life; (10) to develop the capacity to maintain good relations with his fellow-men, both individually and socially; (11) to imbue him with a reverence for the prin-

ciples of democracy; (12) to make him realize the intrinsic value of Nature's grandeur and the attainments of world culture as the heritage of all mankind.

These ideals are realized amongst the young in the "children's societies" (in the schools), in the collective settlements, in the educational institutions for orphans (children's villages and youth settlements), in the Educational Homes in the cities, and in the schools of the workers' settlements. The children are together all day long. Occasionally they even sleep in dormitories, separated from their parents. In the Educational Homes of the towns the pupils spend most of the day together, also taking their meals there. In all these institutions the children are allotted plots of ground for cultivation and are also taught various trades. Instruction is focused on selected central themes mostly connected with vital social problems, in accordance with the so-called project method. Prominent in the scheme of education are "conversations," intended to introduce the pupil to Jewish and world problems from the socialist and national point of view.

The general schools, which constitute the majority of the educational institutions in the cities as well as in the colonies, are elementary schools in the contemporary Jewish national spirit, yet without any commitment to a specific party platform or ideology. Though they are not religious in tendency, they show proper regard for the Jewish tradition. The Bible occupies a central place in their curriculum and the religious laws are taught as a part of the national tradition.

The different trends of education are not merely the result of ideological differences, but also of conditions of life itself. Part of the old and even of the new Yishuv had established traditional educational institutions like the Talmud Torahs. The trustees of these institutions and the parents involved were unwilling to entrust the pupils to schools that were indifferent in matters of religion, or to put them in the charge of teachers who were worldly-minded.

Thus, these schools ultimately came under the control of the Mizrachi, who added many new ones as the Jewish community and its orthodox elements expanded.

As regards the educational institutions of the Histadrut, they are the outcome of conditions of life in collective settlements. Since members of the kvutza work in the fields and gardens all day, it is necessary for someone to take care of their children. In the co-operative villages the pattern of life is somewhat different, but there, too, the parents are busy all day long and have no time to attend to the children.

In recent years the desire has been expressed for the establishment of a uniform school which would be based on a synthesis of principles common to all.

## VII. THE SPREAD OF EDUCATION

The establishment and spread of modern education in Palestine are linked with the growth of the Jewish community by immigration. A large immigration brings in its wake serious educational problems, for it is very difficult to improvise the needed institutions. The Jewish community in Palestine experienced an exceedingly rapid growth with the fifth Aliyah (wave of immigration), following the persecutions in Germany. In 1934-1935, more than 60,000 Jews came to Palestine. Old settlements expanded; new ones were established. This development is clearly reflected in the state of education, as seen in Tables 2 and 3.

Among the professional and technical schools of importance in the country are the Bezalel Art School in Jerusalem, founded in 1906 by Prof. Boris Schatz, and the Nautical School in Haifa.

The schools of the Vaad Leumi are divided into three categories: (1) Maintained schools, that is, those for whose upkeep the Vaad Leumi is responsible; (2) Assisted schools, those receiving grants from the Vaad Leumi and supervised by its Education Department; (3) Affiliated schools, which are under the supervision of the Vaad Leumi but receive no financial assistance. These are the secondary schools

**TABLE 2**  
**NUMBER OF PUPILS IN VAAD LEUMI SCHOOLS, CLASSIFIED**  
**ACCORDING TO GRADE OF SCHOOLS**

<i>Grade of School</i>	<i>Year*</i>			
	<i>1932-35</i> <i>(5693)*</i>	<i>1937-38</i> <i>(5698)</i>	<i>1942-43</i> <i>(5703)</i>	<i>1944-45</i> <i>(5705)</i>
Kindergarten.....	4,877	7,060	8,485	12,490
Elementary.....	15,522	37,172	49,181	55,471
Secondary.....	1,947	4,403	7,846	10,359
Teachers Training.....	386	706	624	886
Technical Schools.....	179	320	603	1,067
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>22,911</b>	<b>49,661</b>	<b>66,739</b>	<b>80,273</b>

\*The year in brackets is that of the Jewish calendar.

and the kindergartens. The Education Department of the Vaad Leumi spent £820,000 during the year 1942-43, and received government grants to the amount of £92,847. The Jewish Agency's share was £46,500. The rest was collected in tuition fees, etc.

As in earlier years, so more recently, too, the government's educational expenditures went almost exclusively to the Arab population, while the Jews received merely negligible grants. Although the money was collected mostly from Jewish taxpayers, the government based its allocation of educational funds on the total number of children of school age in the whole country, overlooking the fact that among the Jews all children of school age attend school, while among the Arabs only a fraction do so. Thus, the Jews who constitute one-third of the population, have received only one-sixth of the government's expenditures on education.

### VIII. PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS

A Central Parents' Council unites the parents' committees, which in each school cooperate with the school administration and participate in pedagogical conferences. The activities of the Central Council include the following: provision of meals for pupils in schools without kitchen facilities; maintenance of a national sanitarium for over three hundred pupils, as well as children's summer homes and camps; provision

of clothes and shoes for needy pupils; provision of children's playgrounds and meeting-places; arrangement of lectures on educational subjects; publication of literature on educational problems.

In 1947 the Teachers Union had 6,400 members. The union maintains a number of beneficial institutions including the Teachers House in Tel Aviv which is the headquarters of various educational offices.

**TABLE 3**  
**NUMBER OF PUPILS IN ALL JEWISH**  
**SCHOOLS IN PALESTINE\***

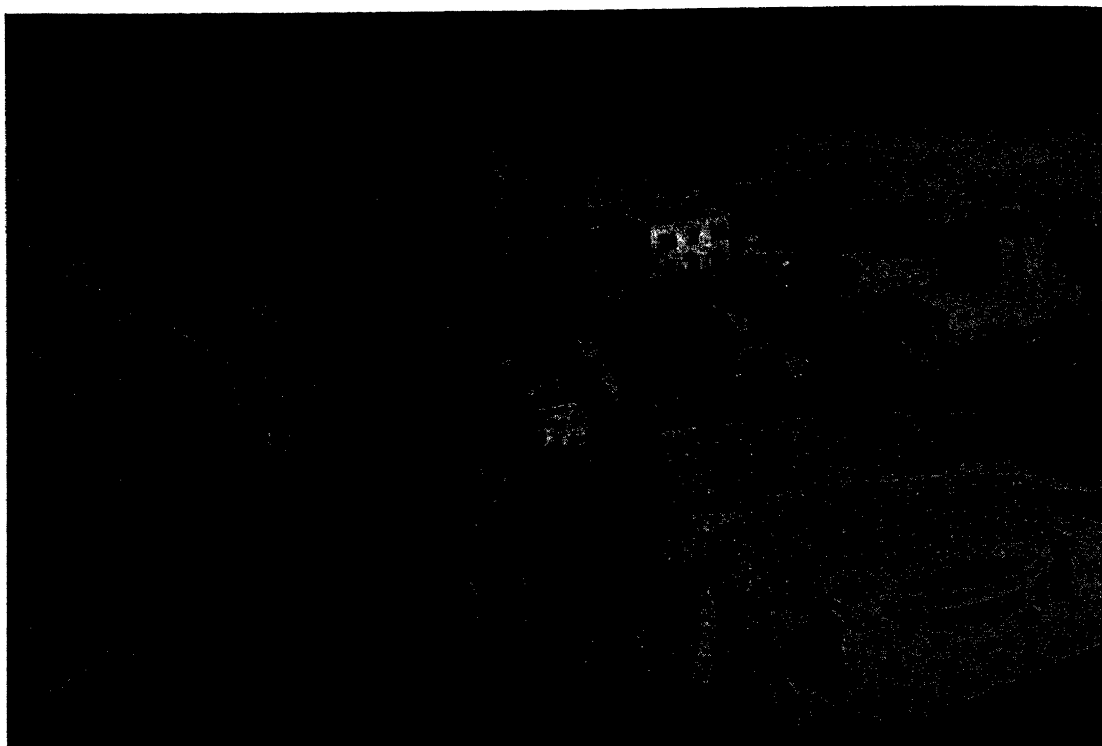
<i>School</i>	<i>YEAR</i>		
	<i>1933</i> <i>(5693)</i>	<i>1938</i> <i>(5698)</i>	<i>1942</i> <i>(5702)</i>
Public School System of the Vaad Leumi.....	24,190	49,920	62,655
Other Schools.....	13,221	21,456	23,971
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>37,411</b>	<b>71,376</b>	<b>86,626</b>

\*According to the Department of Education of the Government.

### IX. AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Agricultural education in Palestine is not regarded merely as a matter of vocational training, but as a new orientation in life. The soil is regarded as the basis of the homeland, and the development of agriculture is accordingly regarded as a national and moral value.

All schools, therefore, offer some form of agricultural training, in accordance with



*Courtesy American Friends of the Hebrew University, New York*

THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY (PAINTING BY LIONEL REISS)

the locality and the age of the pupils. Over a hundred schools have gardens and plots of ground for cultivation. The teachers manifest enthusiasm for nature study and endeavor to implant in their pupils a feeling of kinship with nature.

Agricultural education was initiated by the Mikveh Israel school, as mentioned above. In addition, there are agricultural schools for girls in Nahalal and Ayanot, supported by the WIZO. In Pardes Hana there is a secondary agricultural school, established by the Jewish Agriculturists' Association. On Mount Tabor there is the Kadoorie Agricultural School, named after the Baghdad Jewish philanthropist who endowed it. The Women's Council of the Palestine Workers' Organization maintains a training farm for girls. In the children's village, Ben Shemen, the older pupils are trained in agriculture.

## X. THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY

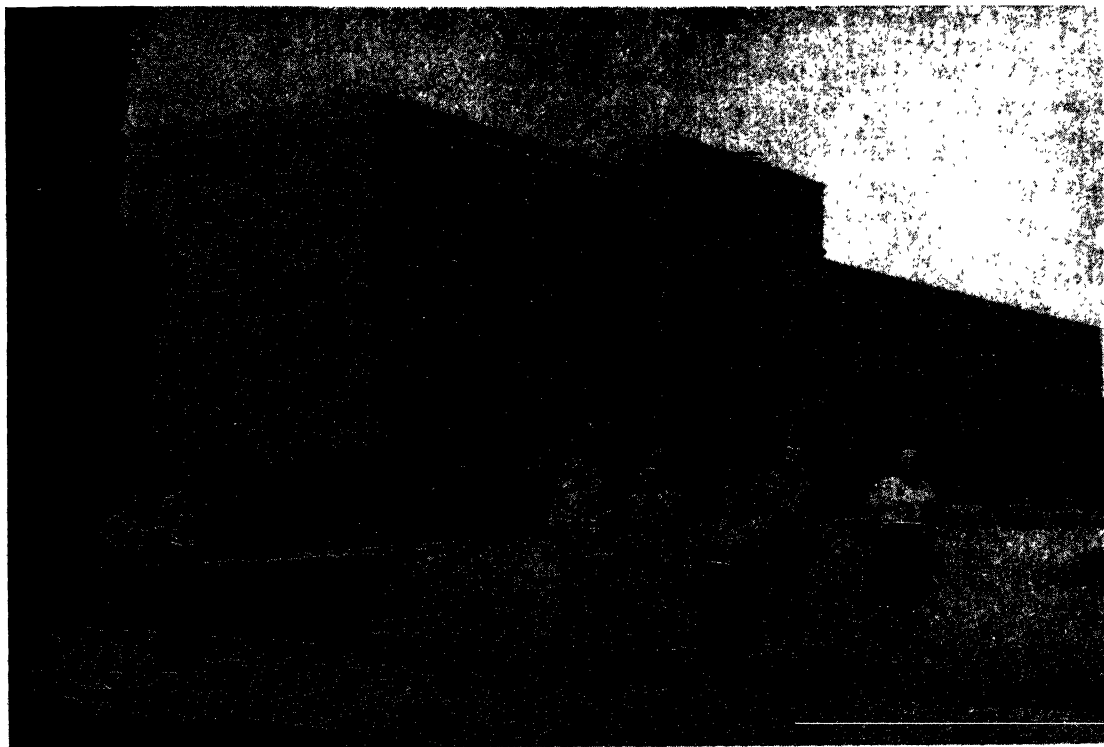
The pride of Jewish education in Palestine is the Hebrew University, dream of Zionists almost from the first day of the movement. The eleventh Zionist Congress (1913) had authorized the establishment of a university in Palestine, and on July 24, 1918, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, president of the Zionist Organization, laid the foundation stone on Mt. Scopus. Lord Balfour officially opened the University on April 1, 1925, an event considered momentous not only in Jewish history, but in the progress of human culture in general.

A number of difficulties confronted the University. Foremost among these at the outset were the problems of finding qualified teachers conversant with Hebrew and of making the Hebrew language a suitable medium of instruction in the modern advanced sciences. But gradually the initial difficulties were surmounted.

The University is administered by a Board of Governors, consisting of representatives of the Zionist Organization, of the Friends of the Hebrew University in various countries, noted scholars and scientists, and outstanding benefactors of the University.

The Faculty of Humanities comprises three divisions: the Institute of Jewish

Mathematics and Physics, the Chaim Weizmann School of Chemistry, the departments of botany, zoology, geology, and a laboratory for meteorology and climatology. The Medical School for Post-graduate Study and Research is connected with the two institutions maintained by the Hadassah: the Rothschild Hospital and the Henrietta Szold School of Nursing. The Medical



*Courtesy American Friends of the Hebrew University, New York*

HUMANITIES BUILDING OF THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY, JERUSALEM

Studies (instruction and research in Bible, Talmud, Jewish law, Hebrew literature and language, Jewish philosophy, history and sociology); the School of Oriental Studies (devoted to the study of the culture of Islam, Arabic literature and language, art and archeology of the Near East); and General Humanities (philosophy, psychology, education, history, classical languages, social sciences and international relations). The Faculty of Science includes the Einstein Institute of Mathe-

School is engaged in extensive research, and its scientists have to their credit several important discoveries concerning tropical and sub-tropical diseases. Thus far this institution has been engaged in research only, and has offered no instruction.

The School of Agriculture and the Agricultural Research Station in Rehovot aim to train experts in the agriculture of Palestine. The Department of Education trains teachers for the secondary schools.



Integral parts of the University are the National Library, containing some 441,000 volumes (of which about 120,000 are Judaica), the Museum of Jewish Antiquities, and the Museum of Biblical and Talmudic Botany.

The University has its own press and

issues two periodical publications: *Tarbiz*, a quarterly dedicated to the humanities, and *Kiryat Sefer*, a bibliographical quarterly. The faculty and research staff in 1946 numbered 154. The number of students in 1946-1947 was 1,000, most of them of Palestinian origin.

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# JEWISH COMMUNAL ORGANIZATION IN MODERN TIMES

Mark Wischnitzer

## INTRODUCTION

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## INTRODUCTION

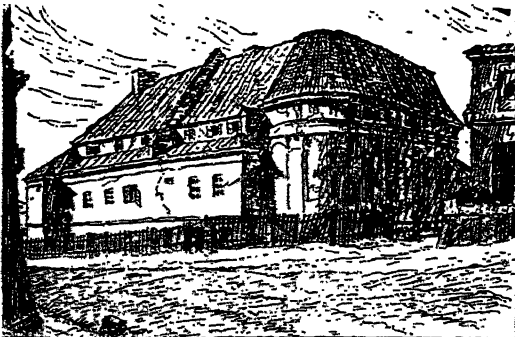
Wherever Jews have settled, since the beginning of the Diaspora, they have proceeded to create their own communal organizations. Various factors of an internal character — religious, cultural, social and economic — as well as external factors, have contributed to this development. As a rule, the Synagogue was the central institution, supplemented by the "house of study" (*bet ha-midrash*), a ritual bath and various religious societies. In addition, the community conducted philanthropic and social welfare work, and usually found it necessary as well to cope with political and economic tasks involving relations with the

non-Jewish world. These ramified activities required the services of both lay officers and salaried officials. In the course of more than 2,000 years, the community has assumed specific forms in individual countries, adapted to local political and cultural conditions. In modern times, in certain countries, the Jewish communities have been recognized as legal entities with compulsory membership and the right of taxation; in others, the voluntary system has prevailed. Regardless of the difference in form and method of operation, however, the communal organizations have continued to serve as administrative agencies, concerned with the entire range of needs and interests of the Jewish population.

In addition, the development of the Jewish community was often fostered by the policy of the state which, prior to the nineteenth century, tended in general to segregate the Jewish population. The status of the Jews as a distinct social group, a "corporation," was emphasized by the fact that they generally lived apart, in special districts. Within its own quarter, in the "Jew-Street" or the "Jews' Town," the Jewish corporation was in need of its own administrative machinery, with a range of activity as broad as that of the local municipality. The classic example of this phenomenon flourished in the old Polish-Lithuanian state from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. The *kehillah* in Poland and Lithuania had administrative and judicial authority; it imposed and collected taxes; regulated economic life; and maintained an educational system, hospitals, etc. The Jews of neighboring villages belonged to the nearest urban community, or or-

ganized a separate rural community. Such rural communities gradually developed into small urban organizations.

The identity of interests, which called into being the local Jewish communities, later impelled them to constitute provincial federations. The assemblies of communal delegates—the Vaad ha-Galil (District Council) or Vaad ha-Medinah (Provincial Council)—discussed and administered matters of common interest to the affiliated communities, such as taxation and the economic and cultural problems which could not be solved on a local basis. Subsequent evolution eventually led to the formation of a National Council centralizing the activities of the provincial bodies, the Vaad Arba Aratsot (Council of the Four Lands) in Poland and the Lithuanian Vaad, which lasted until 1764.



THE MEETING PLACE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE FOUR LANDS IN LUBLIN IN THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES

At the end of the eighteenth century, Poland was partitioned among Russia, Austria and Prussia. Thereafter the Jewish communities assumed the new forms which are the subject of this article.

In the course of the nineteenth century, the Jewish community lost its autonomous character and ceased to be responsible to the government for the taxes due from the Jewish population. It became essentially a religious association or a congregation with a more or less extensive program of cultural, philanthropic and social welfare ac-

tivities. In the course of time, several types of communal organization crystallized, the local variations reflecting the political structure and the social orientation of the countries in question.

The survey of Jewish communal organization presented here will deal with individual countries, according to geographic divisions. It will not include the United States and Palestine, which are the subjects of separate articles.

## I. CENTRAL EUROPE

In the countries of Central Europe, the Jewish community became a legally recognized public body with compulsory membership. All Jewish inhabitants were obliged to be members of their local community and to pay a tax determined by the communal administration. This type of organization was particularly well established in Germany.

### 1. GERMANY

The legal status and functions of the communities in Prussia were fixed by the law of July 23, 1847. Although this law reserved for the state the right to control their activities, the Jewish communities were, both in law and practice, unhampered. In 1876 an important modification was introduced with reference to communal membership. The so-called "Resignation Act" created a breach in the principle of compulsory membership. It became permissible to resign from the community even without renouncing the Jewish faith. Article 137 of the Weimar Constitution of 1919, on the other hand, widened the legal sphere of the Jewish communities, enabling them to extend the franchise to women and to introduce proportional representation.

The importance of the communities in the Jewish life of that country may be gauged by the extent of their budgets. In 1928 the Berlin community, the largest in Germany, had a budget of 9,907,492 marks. The distribution of its expenditures was as follows:

<i>Category</i>	<i>Marks</i>
Religious.....	2,763,815
Schools and Libraries.....	1,125,639
Charity and Social Welfare.....	2,886,095
General Jewish Affairs.....	415,000
Administration of Communal Property.....	929,000
General Administration.....	1,787,943
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>9,907,492</b>

The principal source of revenue was provided by the communal taxes. In 1928, 60,000 members contributed a total of 6,045,256 marks.

In 1929 Frankfort-on-Main, with a Jewish population of 30,300, had 14,446 communal taxpayers. The annual expenditures of this community amounted to nearly 2,000,000 marks. In addition to the official communities, Berlin and Frankfort also had separate Orthodox congregations.

With the advent of Hitler the role of the communities underwent a complete change. In addition to their customary activities, they now had to assume important tasks in the social and cultural spheres. The larger communities established special employment bureaus, vocational guidance offices, retraining courses for the young people, etc. They expanded their school systems and provided new educational facilities, such as schools for agricultural and technical training and the study of foreign languages. Considerable attention was also given to physical training, reading rooms, museums of Jewish art, lectures, etc. A substantial part of the communal budget was spent on emigration. In this field the communities worked hand in hand with the Palestine Office, the Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden, and the Hauptstelle fuer Juedische Wanderfuersorge, which were the central emigration agencies in Germany.

The report of the Executive Board for 1937 may give us an idea of the extensive program of the Berlin Jewish community under the Nazi regime. At the end of 1937, the 140,000 Jews in that city represented 40% of the country's Jewish population. The number of members who paid communal taxes had dropped to 35,000, as com-

pared with 60,000 in 1928. Expenditures in 1937 were 12,000,000 marks (of which 7,000,000 were covered by tax receipts), probably the highest total of any European Jewish community in that period. The community employed a personnel of 1,300; including rabbis, teachers, executives and other workers. It maintained 6 primary schools, an academic institution, a secondary school, a commercial school, a domestic science school and a Hebrew school. It also provided for 40 youth clubs, 3 athletic fields, 7 playgrounds, 10 gymnasiums, 4 training workshops, and a course in gardening. In addition, the Jewish community maintained the large Jewish Hospital, a polyclinic for out-patients, 8 homes for the aged, 2 orphanages and a home for backward boys.

Besides these activities, the communities were compelled in the years of the Nazi regime to organize "Winter Relief Campaigns," in order to cope with the appalling number of destitute persons. In the season of 1936-1937, the communities spent 3,630,353 marks on winter relief; the following year the number assisted rose to 76,739, or over a fifth of German Jewry. During the winter of 1937-1938, the Berlin community had to take care of 25,851 persons, of whom 40% had never before required such aid.

In the several states of the Reich: Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Wuerttemberg, Baden, etc., the communities were organized in Landesverbaende or Landesversammlungen (federations or conferences). In Bavaria and Wuerttemberg these organizations had the right to tax all Jews for the support of the central bodies and the institutions maintained by them. In addition, until 1933 the state granted to the federations of communities a certain subvention for religious activities. In Prussia the large communities contributed to the budget of their federation.

The Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland, founded in 1934, was not a federation of communities, but a central agency for social welfare and cultural ac-

tivities, composed of representatives of various Jewish organizations (Zionists, Juedischer Centralverein, war veterans, Orthodox Jews) and of the Landesverbaende as well as of the largest communities. Born in a period of emergency, and receiving the active cooperation of philanthropic organizations abroad, the Reichsvertretung came to the aid of victims of the Nazi policy. In 1938 the expenditures of the Reichsvertretung amounted to 5,704,206 marks, or 1,264,939 marks more than in 1937. Of the former total, 2,200,000 marks were collected in Germany and the remainder was received from abroad.

By virtue of the decree of March 28, 1938, the communities and federations of communities lost their status of bodies recognized by public law. Thereafter, the communities were obliged to pay various taxes on property, income, sales, etc., like other private associations.

In 1946 there were in Germany approximately 18,000 Jewish survivors, including the so-called *Mischlinge* (Jews of mixed parentage). Community councils and institutions have been re-established in Berlin, Munich, Hamburg, Cologne, Leipzig, Frankfurt, and in some 15 other cities. Most of the communities have democratically elected councils. Synagogues, hospitals and homes for the aged have been restored. Federations of communities have been organized in Wuerttemberg, Baden, the Palatinate, Westphalia and elsewhere, including the Soviet Zone.

## 2. AUSTRIA

In the old Austrian monarchy, the Act of 1890 created a legal basis for the Jewish community. The Jews of each locality became members of the community, which was empowered to tax its membership. In Vienna, the largest Jewish community in Austria (176,000 of the total Jewish population of 191,841 in 1934), the electoral system was modified after the First World War to make members who were not citizens eligible for election to office. Until

1938 there were 33 Jewish communities in Austria.

In 1933 the Vienna Jewish community (Israelitische Kultusgemeinde) had a budget of 7,000,000 Austrian shillings. No less than 2,500,000 shillings were spent on social welfare. The growing impoverishment of the Jewish population made it necessary for the community to provide a free-loan service for artisans and small tradesmen, and organize employment agencies. In 1935 this community maintained over 40 institutions, including 15 kindergartens and nurseries, 4 youth centers with educational courses, 7 orphanages, 2 institutions for the blind, a Jewish hospital with 10 departments, a children's clinic, and a home for the aged. The educational system comprised 3 Jewish primary schools, a *Realgymnasium*, a Hebrew teachers' seminary, and a Rabbinical seminary.

Following the German invasion of Austria (March, 1938), the Jewish communities lost their character as public corporations. Those in the smaller cities soon ceased to exist, while the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde of Vienna continued to function mainly for the task of facilitating the exodus of the Jews, under the orders of the Gestapo.

Toward the end of 1938, the Jewish population of Vienna numbered 115,000, 62,000 having emigrated in the course of the year. Some 30,000 were receiving food in the communal kitchens, and 15,000 families were provided with fuel by the community.

The present Jewish population of Austria is 7,000 residents (1947), including *Mischlinge*, and some 35,000 displaced persons. In Vienna an elected community council conducts a number of welfare institutions with funds provided by the Joint Distribution Committee.

## 3. HUNGARY

The Jews in Hungary were organized in congregations of three types: Orthodox, "Neolog" (Liberal), and so-called "status quo" congregations. The latter type con-

sisted of communities in which no separation between the Orthodox and Liberal groups occurred, but which maintained the status quo of 1867, the time before the split. Following their separation, the Neolog and Orthodox congregations formed their own central organs, and in 1929 a Federation of the "status quo" congregations was organized.

Until World War I, the Orthodox congregations constituted the majority. The situation changed with the transfer of Slovakia and Carpatho-Ruthenia to Czechoslovakia. Thus, in 1938 there were in Hungary:

<i>Congregations</i>	<i>Membership</i>
180 Neolog	246,488
131 Orthodox	182,899
37 "Status quo"	15,180

On the basis of a law enacted in 1928, the Orthodox and the Neolog groups each had a representative in the upper chamber of Parliament.

On the eve of World War II, of the more than 200,000 Jews of Budapest, 60,000 were communal taxpayers. In 1929 the communal budget amounted to 4,000,000 pengő. This community had 8 synagogues and numerous smaller places of worship. It also maintained several schools for boys and girls and a large library. The Budapest Hevrah Kadisha (founded 1790) applied its ample resources to the maintenance of the Jewish Hospital and other institutions. In addition to the official community, Budapest also had an autonomous Orthodox community.

At the end of World War II, there were 180,000 Jewish survivors in Hungary. The process of re-establishing their communal life has been slow. The federations of the Neolog and Orthodox congregations have been revived, and with the aid of the Joint Distribution Committee, synagogues and other institutions have been reopened in a considerable number of places.

#### 4. CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In those parts of Czechoslovakia which formerly belonged to Austria, the commu-

nities were based on the law of 1890. The federations of communities in Moravia and Silesia, a federation of congregations of Greater Prague, and two federations in Bohemia (one of Czech-speaking, the other of German-speaking groups) were organized after World War I. All of these were united in the Supreme Council of the Federations of Jewish Communities in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.

In Slovakia, formerly a province of Hungary, there were both Orthodox and Neolog congregations. In Carpatho-Ruthenia almost all congregations were Orthodox and were subject to the jurisdiction of a central board, which had its seat in Uzhorod.

At the end of World War II, a federation of Jewish Communities in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia was established, while the Orthodox communities in Slovakia formed a separate federation, with Bratislava as its center.

## II. EASTERN EUROPE

### 1. RUSSIA

In the former Polish territories annexed by Russia at the end of the 18th century, the local kahal organizations continued to operate as before—until 1804, when the kahal was deprived of many of its juridical functions. Matters affecting general Jewish interests were discussed by representatives of the major communities, the "Deputies of the Jewish People," who submitted petitions to the government. With the introduction of military conscription in 1827, each kahal was made responsible for its quota of Jewish conscripts. The government continued to require the kahal to collect taxes from the Jewish population, and introduced more stringent regulations in 1835. On December 19, 1844, however, the kahal was abolished by Nicholas I. Its administrative powers were taken over by the police, and its economic functions devolved upon the municipal councils, which established special "desks" for Jewish affairs. But there remained the Jewish "conscription trustees" and tax-collectors, for

the government would forego neither special Jewish taxes nor the system of recruiting Jewish conscripts. The religious needs of the communities and their philanthropic activities were thenceforth entrusted to voluntary associations.

While the rabbis retained the spiritual leadership of the community, in some places there were, in addition, so-called "crown rabbis" (instituted in 1835) to record births, marriages and deaths. A Rabbinical Commission was established by the government in 1848 as the supreme authority in matters pertaining to religious law and rabbinical functions, especially in regard to divorce. The Minister of Interior had the power to convene the Rabbinical Commission at his discretion, but between 1848 and 1912 only six sessions took place.

In 1909 Jewish leaders in all parts of Russia met to consider steps for establishing properly organized communities, but this effort failed. In 1917 Jewish communities were formed throughout Russia on democratic principles and a central office was established. The Bolshevik regime, however, established a Jewish Commissariat, Yevkom, within the Commissariat of the Affairs of Nationalities; the Yevkom liquidated the communities and other Jewish associations as bourgeois institutions, and was itself dissolved in 1923. In the meantime an organization called Yidgezkom (abbreviation of Yidisher Gezelshaftlicher Komitet) carried on social welfare activities for the benefit of the Jewish population in the Soviet Union. Established in 1920 as the result of an agreement between the Jewish Commissariat and the Joint Distribution Committee, it included at first representatives of the then still functioning Jewish organizations, such as the Yekopo (Jewish Relief Agency created at the beginning of World War I), ORT and OSE, which were still permitted to exist. The activities of the Yidgezkom were terminated in 1924. Since then the Jews of the Soviet Union have remained without a community organization, although synagogues

have been maintained by their members in various places.

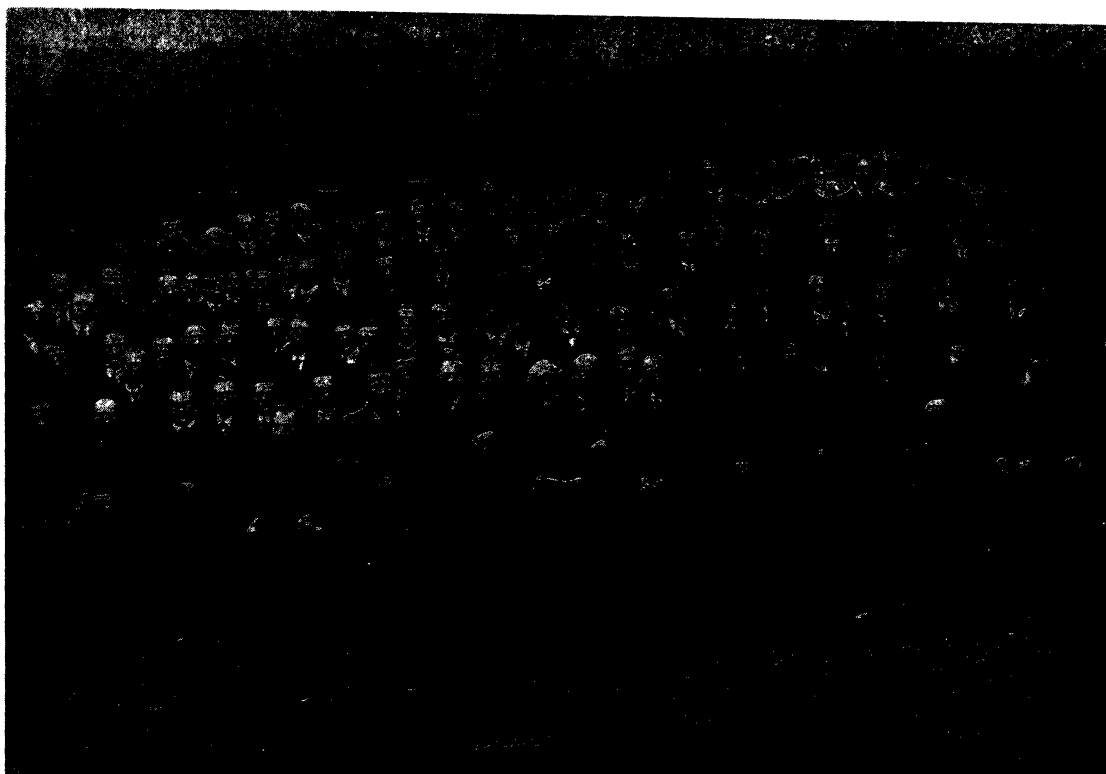
During World War II the Moscow Jewish community became active. Its administration was evacuated to Tashkent but later returned to Moscow. No information about the structure and scope of this community is as yet available.

## 2. UKRAINE

During the short interlude of the Ukrainian People's Republic (1917-1920), an attempt was made to establish a system of Jewish national autonomy. The ground for this autonomy was prepared by the activities of the Jewish population itself during the first year of the Revolution of 1917. On July 16, 1917, a "Secretariat for Jewish Affairs" was set up, which later became the Ministry of Jewish Affairs. A Jewish National Council was formed in October 1917 to represent the Jewish population in the Ukrainian Government ("Central Rada"). On January 9, 1918, on the eve of the proclamation of Ukrainian independence, the Rada adopted a bill establishing "national-personal autonomy" for all national minorities in the Ukraine, including the Jews.

Subsequent political events, however, made it impossible to implement the autonomy measure. The democratic Rada was soon replaced by the so-called Hetman regime with the help of the Germans who occupied the Ukraine on the collapse of the Brest-Litovsk peace parley. The Hetman proceeded to abolish Jewish national autonomy, though without interfering too actively in the affairs of the local Jewish communities. Only in November 1918 was it possible to convene a Jewish National Assembly, attended by 125 delegates from all parts of the country.

After the overthrow of the Hetman regime on December 10, 1918, Jewish national autonomy was restored by a decree of the Ukrainian "Directorate," and a new Jewish Minister was appointed. But the tumultuous events of the following years rendered autonomy illusory.



*Courtesy Yiddish Scientific Institute (Yivo), New York*

THE JEWISH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UKRAINE CONVENED IN KIEV IN NOVEMBER 1918

### 3. POLAND

In Congress Poland, constituted in 1815, the old kahal was replaced by a new form of communal organization. Under a law enacted in 1822, the religious affairs of each community were administered by a Synagogue Board (*Dozor Bozniczy*), consisting of the rabbi, his assistant and three elected laymen.

When the new Polish state was created in 1918, the Jewish communities were of various forms. Very few enjoyed a legal status, based on the laws inherited from the Austrian and German Empires. No uniform system for the whole of Poland was adopted until 1927. Under the law enacted that year, in every locality (with the exception of Silesia) all Jewish inhabitants were considered as members of a religious association recognized by the state.

The communities were empowered by the law to provide for the religious needs

of their members, and their budgets were subject to the approval of governmental authorities. Their activities comprised the religious education of the youth, supervision of the kosher meat supply, and administration of communal property and funds. In addition, the communities conducted philanthropic activities. The communal income was derived from taxes paid by members, the tax on *shehitah* and burial fees. Elections were based on the principle of equal, secret, direct and proportional voting, limited to males.

As a consequence, the communities became to some extent an arena of social and political struggle. The parties of the left abstained for a time from taking part in the communal elections. The labor parties, including the Bund and the Poale Zion (both right and left factions), advocated a secular communal organization and were in outspoken opposition to the religious character of the official communities. In



1936, however, the labor parties participated in the communal elections.

Although there are no complete figures regarding the total annual budgets of all Jewish communities, we have some useful indications as to sources of income. In 1926, 503 communities in the territory of former Congress Poland and in Little Poland (Jewish population 1,874,149) had a total budget of some 20,000,000 zlotys. An examination of the 1926 budgets of 74 large and 314 minor communities, in the area of former Congress Poland and in 3 districts of the province of Bialystok, shows a total income of 13,409,646 zlotys, derived as follows: 44.9% from *shehitah* fees, 39.2% from communal taxes, and 9% from burial fees. Fully 80% of their expenditures, totalling 8,343,351 zlotys, went for religious purposes.

The expenditures of the Warsaw community, 1,782,744 zlotys in 1926, increased greatly during the two subsequent years, to 4,502,370 and to over 5,000,000 zlotys, respectively. In 1938 this community planned its budget on an income of 3,265,528 zlotys, as compared with 3,152,115 in 1937. As is shown below, close to half of this total was to be derived from communal taxation.

The appropriation for health and social welfare shows an increase of 44.6%, and the appropriation for schools an increase of 13.8% over the 1937 expenditures.

#### BUDGET OF WARSAW COMMUNITY, 1938

<i>Department</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>Expenditures</i>
Administration.....	372,600	584,062
Religious affairs.....	73,440	302,338
Taxes.....	1,540,000	—
Cemeteries.....	995,000	346,041
Schools.....	69,341	1,101,706
Health and Social Welfare..	205,182	660,583
Economic.....	9,965	270,797
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>3,265,528</b>	<b>3,265,527</b>

The budgets of a number of medium-sized and small communities were as follows:

<i>Community</i>	<i>Jewish Population</i>	<i>Zlotys</i>
Lublin.....	45,000	250,000
Pinsk.....	25,000	129,000
Sosnowiec.....	25,000	193,000
Kielce.....	20,000	170,000
Boryslaw.....	15,000	100,000
Zdunska-Wola.....	10,000	79,000
Turka.....	4,500	40,000
Zolkiew.....	2,000	42,000

On November 28, 1939, the Nazi authorities issued an order concerning the structure of the Jewish communities in Poland. A Judenrat (Jewish Council) of 24 members in the larger communities, and of 12 members in cities comprising up to 10,000 Jews, was established with the obligation "to carry out, through its president or vice-president, the demands of the German authorities." As the Nazi regime became more ruthless, Jewish Councils were forced to provide lists of Jews for deportation. Rather than comply with these and other inhuman demands, many Council members committed suicide, while others were executed.

As the liberation of Poland proceeded, an entirely new form of Jewish communal organization was introduced. Originally established at Lublin in 1944, the Central Committee of Polish Jews directs all secular activities and acts as representative of the surviving Jewish population in relations with foreign organizations. The 23 members of the Board of the Central Committee represent seven parties and organizations, none of which is concerned with religious affairs. In 1946 there were 16 district, 35 regional and 99 local branches of the Central Committee. Of the many hundreds of religious communities, only 76 remained; these formed an Organization Committee and a Rabbinical Council of fifteen members. These congregations maintain educational and welfare institutions in addition to synagogues and cemeteries.

#### 4. BALTIC STATES

When the Lithuanian Republic was founded (1918), the Jews were recognized as a national minority enjoying full legal

equality. Toward the end of 1918, the state established a Ministry of Jewish Affairs, which convened the first session of the National Council, attended by delegates from 78 communities, on January 12, 1920. In cooperation with the Ministry of Jewish Affairs, the National Council took charge of the autonomous organization of Lithuanian Jewry. The Act of March 4, 1920, defined the structure of the local community as a legally recognized organization, empowered to levy communal taxes and administered by officials elected on a democratic basis. The jurisdiction of the community extended not only to religious life but also to education, social welfare, and other activities.

Although the Lithuanian Constitution of August 1, 1922, (Articles 73 and 74) guaranteed Jewish national autonomy, these rights were ignored by the growing political reaction. In 1924 both the Ministry of Jewish Affairs and the National Council were abolished, and two years later the communities were entirely dissolved. In 1927 elections were ordered for the establishment of "synagogue societies," i.e., of voluntary associations, according to the old Russian pattern. Each town usually had a society for religious affairs (*Adat Israel*) and another for social welfare (*Ezrah*). The Jewish schools were the only survival of the autonomy achieved in the earlier years.

The national autonomy granted the Jews in Latvia by a law enacted in 1919, extended only to cultural affairs, which meant the school system. The state guaranteed the rights of the minority schools in general, including the Jewish schools, which received subventions. The Ministry of Education had a Jewish Department, which cooperated with the delegates of the Jewish organizations and of the Jewish teachers' unions (Orthodox, Hebrew and Yiddish).

The principle of Jewish national autonomy was clearly defined by Estonian law. The National Cultural Autonomy Act of February 5, 1925, which was regarded as

the most liberal law of its kind in the Baltic states, gave the Jews the right to create a National Council. This Council was responsible for all phases of communal life other than social welfare, concerning which the state adopted no explicit policy. The principle of minority rights was also proclaimed in the decree of January 21, 1927. The Jewish schools, in which Yiddish and Hebrew were the languages of instruction, received subventions from the state and the municipal administrations.

### III. BALKAN STATES

In Old Romania and Bessarabia the communities were private associations. In Transylvania (which belonged to Hungary before World War I), the separation between Orthodox and Neolog congregations prevailed. In Bucovina the communities were organized under the Austrian law of 1890. By virtue of the law of April 22, 1928, concerning religious worship in Greater Romania, the Jews in every locality constituted a single community. Thereafter only the Sephardic communities in Old Romania and the Orthodox communities in Transylvania preserved their separate organizations. To some extent the government contributed toward the maintenance of Jewish communal institutions. The Chief Rabbi represented the Jewish religious group in the Senate.

In 1921 the communities of Yugoslavia were organized into a national federation, through the medium of which they received subventions from the state. The communities were public bodies recognized by law and exempt from taxation. Every Jew was required to be a member of his local community and the organization of separate communities was prohibited. Only the Sephardic communities in Serbia and Bosnia and the Orthodox communities in the Voivodina, which existed before 1921, were permitted to continue their separate existence. Both these groups had their own federations, which were affiliated with the General Federation of Jewish Communities. The General Federation worked with

the Rabbinical Synod, whose chairman was the Chief Rabbi of Belgrade.

The Jewish communal organization in Bulgaria enjoyed a very large measure of autonomy, based on the minority rights embodied in the peace treaty of 1919. Membership in the community was compulsory and the state empowered the community to tax its members. The statutes, adopted by a congress of communal representatives (1920), declared all Jews residing in the country to constitute both a religious and national entity. The Ashkenazic and Sephardic communities, which had previously led a separate existence, were united in each locality, with the exception of the Sephardic Communities of Sofia and Rustchuk. The central organization was the Jewish Council, which elected the 21 members of the Central Consistory. There were three Jewish courts recognized by the state. Each court consisted of 3 rabbis and 2 consultants, one of whom had to be a jurist. The court of appeal was the *Bet-Din ha-Gadol*, presided over by the Chief Rabbi, assisted by 3 other rabbis and 3 laymen (including one jurist) as consultants. The verdicts of these courts were executed by the secular authorities. The consistory supervised a fairly extensive school system, in which Hebrew was the language of instruction in most subjects. The subventions of the government and the municipalities covered about 20% of the budget of these Jewish schools.

The Jewish communities in Greece were assumed to embrace all Jews resident in the country. The payment of communal taxes was compulsory and together with the revenue from communal property (in Salonica) provided the major source of income. These funds were supplemented by state subsidies. The Jewish courts were officially recognized. The German invasion disrupted the communities and resulted in the extermination of the great majority of the Jewish population. At the beginning of 1946, representatives of about 20 communities held their first conference in Athens.

#### IV. WESTERN EUROPE

##### 1. FRANCE

In France, where church and state were separated by the law of 1905, the Jewish communities were voluntary associations. The congregations (*associations cultuelles*) were united in the Union des Associations Cultuelles de France et d'Algérie, which was headed by the Central Jewish Consistory. Among the 52 members of the Consistory were laymen elected by the congregations, the Chief Rabbi and two other rabbis. Each congregation of 200 or more members was entitled to a representative, and the larger organizations to two or more. The congregations allocated a part of their income to the Central Consistory, which was required to provide financial aid to congregations in need of assistance.

Alsace and Lorraine retained the old consistorial system dating back to the epoch of Napoleon I. There were three departmental consistories, in Metz, Strasbourg and Colmar, each headed by a Chief Rabbi. The rabbis of this province were paid by the state and their appointment by the communities was subject to the approval of the secular authorities.

In Paris the congregations represented various types, ranging from the most Orthodox to Liberal, and including Sephardic synagogue groups. The East-European Jews maintained a separate organization.

In addition to the *associations cultuelles*, there were other organizations concerned with Jewish education, social welfare, child care, etc. Most of the societies of East-European Jews engaged in such activities were affiliated with the Federation of Jewish Societies in France (*Fédération des Sociétés Juives de France*).

After the collapse of France in June 1940, both the Germans in Paris and the Vichy government in the unoccupied part of the country set up "General Unions of Israelites," which were intended to replace the dissolved communal institutions. The Vichy government placed the Unions under the supervision of the General Commissioner of Jewish Affairs, but exempted re-

ligious organizations from this jurisdiction.

With the liberation of the country, Jewish communal activities were reorganized and in a remarkably short time an intensive communal life was re-established. The Central Consistory resumed its work and the Federation of Jewish Societies expanded its welfare and cultural programs. These and other organizations are affiliated with the Conseil Représentatif des Israélites de France (CRIF), which serves to centralize activities involving the interests of the Jewish population at large.

## 2. THE NETHERLANDS

In 1870 the Jewish communities organized the Nederlandsch Israelitisch Kerk Genootschap, headed by a Central Committee. Each community was autonomous in regulating religious affairs in its area, but observed the general directions of the Central Committee. The government had the right of supervision, and the communities received subventions from the state. In 1917 the new constitution which was adopted, restricted the autonomy of the communities to a certain extent. Each province had a Chief Rabbi. The largest Jewish community was that of Amsterdam, which in 1925 had a budget of about 700,000 guildens. The two Sephardic congregations, in Amsterdam and at The Hague, were not affiliated with the local Ashkenazic communities.

World War II disrupted the communities of the Netherlands Jews, whose number was reduced from 150,000 to about 30,000. Following the liberation of the country, 25 communities were reorganized with the aid of Joint Distribution Committee funds. The Jewish Coordination Commission was formed to centralize the activities of 29 affiliated societies.

## 3. BELGIUM

Membership in the Jewish communities, of which the largest existed in Brussels and Antwerp, was voluntary. The state provided some funds for the Jewish community. In accordance with the consistorial

regulation of April 24, 1892, the religious affairs of the communities were directed by the Central Consistory in Brussels, which was composed of the Chief Rabbi, six members of the Brussels community and representatives of the other communities. Educational, charitable and social activities were conducted independently by various societies and institutions. The need for centralization of all these activities resulted in the establishment of a Council of Jewish Organizations in 1933. The German occupation authorities replaced the consistorial system by "Jewish Associations" headed by a "General Union of the Jews." The membership of these groups, however, also included Christians classified by the regime as "non-Aryan."

Following World War II, the Central Consistory was restored. Antwerp again became the main focus of Jewish social and educational activities.

## 4. ITALY

Jewish communal organization in Italy was based on the law enacted in 1930. All Jews were considered members of their local Jewish community and were allowed to resign only if they changed their religion. The community was recognized by public law and had the same rights as all other religious communities. Under the 1930 law, the community had to provide for the religious needs of the Jews according to Jewish law and tradition and had the right to tax its members for these purposes. Until 1938 there were 26 organized communities, which also comprised the Jewish population of neighboring localities. There were synagogues in 84 localities, and there were 91 places in which Jews resided.

The local communities were administered by boards elected for a term of six years. All males over 21 years of age, who had a primary education, were entitled to vote. Board members had to be over 25, graduates of a secondary school and holders of certificates of "good conduct." Non-citizens had the right to vote and to hold

office. The Rome community (15,000 Jews) had an annual budget of 2,000,000 lire, and maintained a school for 500 children at an annual cost of 300,000 lire.

The communities of Italy and her colonies were united in a federation, a public body recognized by law, which aimed to provide for "the preservation of the historical heritage of Italian Jewry, to spread Jewish knowledge and to support Jewish culture."

When the government introduced racial legislation in 1938, and Jewish children were excluded from the secular schools, the communities had to shoulder new tasks in the sphere of education. During World War II communal activities were banned.

In 1944 a number of communities re-established themselves under the supervision of the Allied Control Commission, and in March 1946 elections were held for the Council of the Federation of Italian Communities (*Consiglio dell'Unione delle Comunità Israelitiche Italiane*). The new Council began to function in May 1946; the departments of Culture and Education, and of Publication and Information have been particularly active. The Council has made representations to the Italian Constituent Assembly concerning the status of the Jewish community. Some 20 communities belong to the Federation.

##### 5. SWITZERLAND

Of the 24 Jewish communities in Switzerland, the most important are in Zurich, Basel, Geneva, Saint Gallen, Lucerne and Lausanne. The Union of Swiss Jewish Communities (*Schweizer Israelitischer Gemeindebund*), founded in 1904, is the central body for political, religious, social and cultural affairs, with headquarters in Zurich. When refugees from Nazi-dominated countries arrived in Switzerland, the Union established a special agency to assist the homeless. The Women's Union, established in 1924, conducts welfare work in various localities, including those which have no organized Jewish communities. One of their outstanding institutions is the sana-

torium Etania in Davos, which has taken care of tuberculosis patients from many countries.

## V. BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

### 1. GREAT BRITAIN

Jewish community life in Great Britain, in the British Dominions and the colonies is organized on the same principle of voluntary association as the French associations *culturelles*. The Ashkenazic congregations in Great Britain are affiliated with the United Synagogue. The rights of the United Synagogue are defined by an Act of Parliament, and its affairs are managed by a council. The Spanish-Portuguese Congregation, which has existed in London since 1657, is a separate organization. A considerable number of synagogues and congregations are affiliated with the Federation of Synagogues, founded in 1887. In addition, there are Liberal and Reform synagogues and the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations, founded in 1926. The spiritual head of British Jewry is the "Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire." The maintenance of schools and welfare institutions and similar tasks are the concern of various other organizations, the most important of which is the Jewish Board of Guardians, founded in 1859. The central agency for refugee and overseas aid is the Central British Fund for Jewish Relief and Rehabilitation.

A number of important communal activities are conducted by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, founded in 1760. Elections to the Board are held every three years. The Board consists of approximately 400 deputies representing 106 London and 129 provincial synagogues, in addition to nearly 30 other institutions. The Board of Deputies is recognized as the official voice of British Jewry. Since 1943 the Zionist members of the Board have been in the majority.

The task of the Board is to safeguard the interests of the Jewish population, to defend their rights and to ensure the freedom

of the Jewish community. The work of the Board is divided among a number of Committees: Legal and Parliamentary, Foreign Affairs, Jewish Defence, Palestine, Aliens, Financial and Educational. The Board does not intervene in the internal religious affairs of the congregations.

## 2. CANADA

Jewish communal life in Canada has developed along lines established in the United States, and many of the Canadian Jewish organizations, e.g. the B'nai B'rith, the Canadian Division of the National Council of Jewish Women, the Poale Zion, Pioneer Women's Organization and the Jewish Labor Committee in Canada—are directly affiliated with the respective organizations in the United States. But, owing to the fact that Jewish immigration into Canada is of more recent date, Canadian Jewry has in many respects developed its own forms of communal life. The influence of the German Jewish element and of Reform Judaism is here less pronounced than in the United States.

According to a survey of the year 1948, among the 186 congregations there were 173 Orthodox (affiliated with the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations in the United States and Canada), nine Conservative and four Reform Congregations. Cultural and charitable activities are conducted by a number of societies and institutions in various cities. In 1947 there were Federations, Welfare Funds or Community Councils in Edmonton, Guelph, Hamilton, Kingston, Kitchener, London, Montreal, Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, Toronto, Vancouver, Windsor and Winnipeg.

Canadian Jewry has also been active in the field of overseas relief. Thanks to the efforts of the Jewish organizations, a considerable number of Jewish refugees have been permitted to enter the country in recent years. The overseas relief work is conducted by the United Jewish Relief Agencies, a subsidiary of the Canadian Jewish Congress, which distributes the funds it raises for overseas relief through the J.D.C.,

the ORT, World Jewish Congress, OSE and other functional organizations. It is also actively engaged in assisting Jewish refugee families to integrate themselves economically and socially into Canadian Jewish life. Very considerable sums have been contributed for Palestine. In 1947 Zionist fund-raising efforts reached the sum of \$2,000,000.

The Canadian Jewish Congress, formed in 1919 and reorganized in 1934, has become the generally recognized representative of Canadian Jewry in all matters of common concern to the Jewish community in the Dominion. The Congress has engaged in various activities for safeguarding the civil, political, economic and religious rights of the Canadian Jews, and in combating anti-Semitism. The aims of the Congress are:

1. To safeguard the civil, political, economic and religious rights of the Jews, and to combat anti-Semitism.
2. To study problems relating to the cultural, economic and social life of the Jews and to seek a solution to such problems; to assist the Jewish Agency in its work for Palestine; to cooperate with world Jewry as may be deemed advisable.

The Congress is divided into three territorial divisions, Eastern, Central and Western. The headquarters of the Congress, which holds biennial sessions, are located in Montreal.

## 3. SOUTH AND EAST AFRICA

The first Jewish congregation in South Africa, the Society of the Jewish Community of the Cape of Good Hope ('Tikvath Israel), was founded in 1841 in Cape Town. More than 60 years later, in 1903, the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal was formed, and that was followed by the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony (1904). In 1912, two years after the establishment of the Union of South Africa, the two bodies merged to form the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. The Board of Deputies is today

the recognized representative body of the South African Jewish Community. At the sixteenth biennial congress of the Board in 1947, it represented about 300 congregations, social institutions and societies.

The purpose of the Board is, first, to take action on all matters affecting the welfare of South African Jewry; and, secondly, to take cognizance of all legislative and other proceedings which might concern the religious rights and customs of the Jewish community. The Board has been particularly active in combating attempts to discriminate against Jewish immigrants and in furthering Jewish cultural activities.

In cooperation with the Zionist Federation of South Africa, the Board in 1928 organized a conference on Jewish educational problems, which decided to establish a Board of Jewish Education. Zionism plays a very important part in Jewish communal life in South Africa; and South African Jewry contributes considerable amounts for the upbuilding of Palestine.

Relief work for the Jewish victims of World War II is conducted by the South African Jewish Appeal in close cooperation with the Joint Distribution Committee.

In August 1946, a conference was called by the Jewish Board of Deputies for the purpose of forming a Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations in South Africa.

The Jewish congregations in Southern Rhodesia are affiliated with the South African Board of Deputies. The largest congregations are those of Bulawayo and Salisbury. In Lusaka, the capital of Northern Rhodesia, a synagogue was erected in 1942, the first in that colony.

In the East of the continent, Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, has a community which was founded in 1904 and has been enlarged by recent immigrants. Other communal institutions include the Nairobi Jewish Helping Hand and Burial Society, and the East African Guild. In 1942 a synagogue was opened in the small town of Nakuru. The arrival of Jewish refugees in Nyassaland and Tanganyika during the war promises further to strengthen organ-

ized communal activities on the African continent.

#### 4. AUSTRALIA

The largest Australian Jewish community is in Sydney, capital of New South Wales. Communal affairs are governed by a Board of Management, while the Board of Jewish Education supervises afternoon and Sabbath classes. The Australian Jewish Welfare Society and the National Council of Jewish Women, both in Sydney, fulfill vital tasks in the reception and adjustment of immigrants. Congregations and welfare institutions have also developed in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane.

In recent years communal and educational activities have been expanding. The Executive Council of Australian Jewry has emerged as the central organization, which consists of 6 delegates from the local Advisory Boards of the six Australian states. The Council meets alternately in Sydney and Melbourne.

#### VI. WESTERN HEMISPHERE

In the Argentine republic, which comprises more than half of the nearly 600,000 Jewish residents in the Latin American states, Jewish communal life is highly developed. The majority of the Jews live in Buenos Aires. In addition to the Sephardic congregations, which have a central organization of their own with a Chief Rabbi at their head, there are several Ashkenazic congregations. Founded in 1868 by German Jews, the first Ashkenazic congregation ultimately passed into the hands of Russian and Romanian immigrants. Later, a second Ashkenazic congregation was founded, followed by many smaller congregations organized by Galician, Romanian, Russian, Hungarian and Polish Jews. Recently a congregation of German-Jewish immigrants was founded. Efforts to achieve a union of all these congregations have thus far met with no success.

The Hevrah Kadisha of Buenos Aires (Asociacion Mutual Isr. de Buenos Aires), with a membership of 30,000, has played a

prominent role in communal life. This society owns the only Ashkenazic cemetery in the city and has accumulated considerable funds through collection of dues. The Hevrah Kadisha has thus been in a position to support social welfare and cultural projects. Under its leadership a Joint Education Board was established in 1934 to supervise about 40 Hebrew schools affiliated with the various congregations. In the course of the last half century, the Hevrah Kadisha has undergone a significant change of character; at the outset a purely religious institution, it has since become primarily a representative communal body, a virtual kehillah.

The first Jewish hospital in South America was founded in 1916 by the Buenos Aires society, Ezrah, which had a membership of 10,000 by 1940. Other charitable institutions, such as the Anti-Tuberculosis League's dispensary, the Home for the Aged and orphanages are supported by private donors. In 1943 the Bikur Cholim (founded in 1896) and the Ezrah Hospital greatly enlarged their facilities. The Asociacion Israelita Filantropica (the Spanish name of the Hilfsverein Deutschsprechender Juden, founded in 1933) has been conducting an extensive program of social welfare activities on behalf of immigrants from Central Europe. A national organization was established in 1933, under the name of Daia (abbreviation of Delegacion des Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas), to deal with domestic Jewish problems and to act as the representative body in relation to Jewish organizations in other countries.

The major Jewish centers in Brazil are in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, in which there are several congregations, Ashkenazic and Sephardic, in addition to charitable and educational institutions. Similar organizations are found in Belem, Recife, Bahia, Porto Alegre, Pelotas, Santos and elsewhere. The German Jewish immigrants of recent years maintain organizations and welfare institutions of their own.

The development of communal life in Uruguay has paralleled the three successive

phases of Jewish immigration since 1900: the Sephardic, the East-European (partly by way of the Argentine), and the German Jewish. Each of these groups maintains its own congregation and other institutions.

In Santiago de Chile, the Sephardic group and the recent immigrants from Germany have their respective congregations. The Circulo Israelita and the Comite Representativo de la Colectividad Israelita de Chile deal with matters outside of the scope of the congregations.

Of the three congregations in Lima, Peru, the Sephardic, the German and the East-European, the latter enjoys a special distinction. This organization has been empowered by the government of Peru to tax its members in proportion to their income, which is the only instance of this kind among the Jewish communities in the Western Hemisphere. The organizations in Lima cooperate in a friendly manner and conjointly own the Jewish cemetery.

The only synagogue in Colombia is located at Cali, although there are Jewish groups in Bogota, Barranquilla, and Medellin also. In 1936 a Jewish Federation of Colombia was organized.

Until 1933 the only Jewish organization in Bolivia was the Circulo Israelita of La Paz. Thereafter several thousand German Jews arrived and established communities in La Paz, Cochabamba and Oruro.

Jewish communal life in Mexico has developed apart from the synagogue. The Central Jewish Committee conducts such activities as anti-defamation work, refugee aid, and relations with foreign Jewish communities, while the Jewish Social Service Bureau, founded in 1930, carries on welfare programs. Educational and cultural activities are steadily expanded, and Yiddish is the predominant language, as in the Argentine and elsewhere in this group of countries. The so-called "Indian Jews" have a small synagogue in Mexico City.

The first congregation in Cuba was founded by Sephardic Jews in 1914. Ten years later this organization established the Centro Hebreo for cultural and social ac-



tivities. The Young Men's Hebrew Association, founded in 1916, undertook to bring together the Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews. Another important organization is the Centro Israelita de Cuba, which comprises an anti-tuberculosis and mental health committee, a Jewish Women's Organization concerned with child care, and a youth group.

The island of Curacao has a Sephardic community, which originated early in the 18th century. In Jamaica, Sephardic synagogues were erected as early as 1684 and 1750 in Spanish Town and Kingston respectively, and the German synagogue was built in 1789. In 1921 the two congregations in Kingston were merged into the United Congregation of Israelites. In the Dominican Republic, the Parroquia Israelita was organized in 1939.

## VII. NORTH AFRICA

In April 1947, delegates from 80 communities attended a congress which decided to set up a Federation of Algerian Jewish communities (*La Fédération des Communautés Israélites d'Algérie*). The aims of the Federation are: to represent and defend Jewish interests; to promote religious and

social institutions; to develop youth group work and vocational training; to obtain civil-service status for the rabbinical personnel. The Federation also decided to form a Supreme Rabbinical Council.

Since May 1945, the Moroccan Jews have been permitted to elect representative communal committees. In 1947 the Council of the Jewish Communities (*Conseil des Communautés Israélites du Maroc*) was established.

The Jewish community in Egypt, with its ancient tradition of self-government, plays an important part in modern times, due especially to its proximity to the new Yishuv in Palestine. The two chief centers of Jewish social and cultural life in Egypt are Cairo and Alexandria. The recognized head of Egypt's Sephardic element is the Chief Rabbi. In addition to the Sephardim, there are two other communities in Cairo—an Ashkenazic and a Karaite. Both Cairo and Alexandria maintain a number of very active philanthropic and educational institutions. During World War II and after, the Egyptian Jewish community was instrumental in aiding Jewish refugees fleeing from the devastated European centers.

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# JEWISH COMMUNAL ORGANIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Charles B. Sherman

- I. ADAPTATION TO AMERICAN SOCIETY
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## I. ADAPTATION TO AMERICAN SOCIETY

In the year 1654 the *St. Charles* brought to New Amsterdam 23 Jewish passengers. Their arrival marks the beginning of a Jewish community destined to become the largest in the world. Among the vast numbers of Europeans who flocked to this new country during the past hundred years, there were millions of Jews. Today, the Jewish population of the United States, comprising almost half of world Jewry, is about two-thirds American-born.

Jewish immigrants came as individuals, but as soon as they touched American soil they proceeded, concurrently with building their own homes, to organize their communal life. The general framework within which this communal life moved, was a new adaptation of the traditional Jewish quarter, bounded in America by the invisible walls of internal cohesion and external pressure. Here, as elsewhere, the pattern of

religious ritual, social welfare, and cultural interests could be maintained only in a Jewish environment. Scarcely had the immigrants disembarked from the *St. Charles*, when they began to provide for religious services and a cemetery of their own. These routine matters, however, were not their only concern. Peter Stuyvesant, cantankerous governor of the Dutch colony, sought to deport the group, and when compelled by pressure from Holland to allow them to remain, he attempted to restrict their civil rights. The Jews refused to acquiesce and fought against their relegation to the status of second-class inhabitants. Asser Levi, a native of Holland, challenged the decree which debarred Jews from service in the town militia and imposed instead a special tax. Asser Levi won his fight, but was soon involved in another, against legal discrimination in the economic field. Again Levi won, and in April 1657 the Jews of New Amsterdam gained full citizenship rights.

Most of the Jewish immigrants concentrated in the major towns of the Atlantic seaboard, and this tendency was a distinct advantage for the development of communal activities. Those who drifted into the interior were often absorbed in the general population and dropped out of the Jewish fold; on the other hand, wherever Jews settled in groups, they planted the seeds of new communities.

Each successive "wave" of Jewish immigrants, the Spanish-Portuguese (Sephar-

dic), the German, and the East-European, reflected the political, socio-economic, and cultural traditions of its land of origin, and was subject to the conditions prevailing in the United States at the time of its arrival. The Sephardim came during the Colonial period; they accordingly settled in the major Atlantic ports, where they engaged in foreign and inter-colonial trade, shipping, etc. Their profound attachment to the Jewish faith and their wide mercantile experience developed a sense of self-confidence and an appreciation of their own worth to society. They laid no claim to achievement in the field of Jewish scholarship. But their insistence on equal civil rights set the pattern for the Jewish status in the United States, and, moreover, made a significant contribution to American democracy in general. By 1840 there were about 15,000 Jews in the United States; and although the Sephardim had already been reduced to a minority, they still considered themselves an aristocracy and took a superior attitude toward the German Jews, who soon began to arrive in greater numbers.

The first German Jews came from small towns. They arrived at a time when the United States was moving its frontiers towards the Pacific coast. Many of them became peddlers and set out to follow the covered wagons, planting new Jewish communities as they moved westward. The Sephardim had long been accustomed to trade on a world scale. Between their religious convictions and secular requirements they had established an inner equilibrium which could, without serious spiritual conflict, be sustained on American soil. The German Jews, on the other hand, had lived in a revolutionary age, the century of rationalism. In Germany the ghetto-walls were slowly giving way under the impact of approaching emancipation, causing a profound disturbance in the age-old relationships between Jews and Gentiles. The problem of adaptation to existing conditions in the new country was, therefore, a much more difficult one for the German

Jews than it had been for the Sephardim; and its solution required infinitely more soul-searching and inner struggle. It was their extraordinary talent for organization which enabled the German Jews to contribute so much to Jewish life in the United States. They became the bearers of Reform Judaism, and since their social needs exceeded the confines of organized religion, they established institutions outside the synagogue. To this day these institutions form the core of Jewish communal activities in the United States.

By the early eighties of the 19th century the Jewish population had grown to about a quarter of a million, largely as a result of immigration from Germany. This situation was soon to change. By the turn of the century the majority of the Jewish population, then numbering approximately one million, was of East-European origin. Jews had arrived in vast numbers from Eastern Europe at a time when the boundaries of the United States had become stabilized, and the mobile frontier had become a thing of the past. The country was speeding its industrialization, devouring, in the process, the labor of millions of immigrants. The newly-arrived Jews settled in the metropolitan centers, New York alone absorbing approximately half of the total Jewish immigration. But the "ghettoization" of the East-European Jews in the United States was the result not of objective forces only; it was as much the result of the immigrants' desire to retain all they could of their old way of life. The characteristic form of the earliest congregations and organizations of this period was the *lands-manshaft*, consisting of former residents of the same home town.

The masses from Eastern Europe transplanted the orthodox *shul*, which became the synagogue of the vast majority of the Jewish population. At the same time they developed secular activities totally independent of the synagogue. Whereas the Sephardim had shown no originality in communal life, and the German Jews had laid the foundations of a religious culture

in the English language, the East-European Jews developed a broad secular culture. The literature, press, theater, educational system, and other forms of expression, which have flourished among Yiddish-speaking Jews in the United States, are unsurpassed by the achievements of any other immigrant group in the New World. This cultural development was stimulated primarily by the Jewish labor movement.

From an economic point of view the differentiation of the three groups within the Jewish community was no less marked than in the political and cultural spheres. The Sephardim had been members of the propertied classes while the immigrants from Germany were still struggling in a state of poverty. The German Jews, in turn, had already made considerable economic progress when the masses from Eastern Europe appeared. The social division was now threefold. Sephardim kept German Jews at arm's length, while the latter shunned contact with Jews from Russia and Poland. But for the intervention of a number of internal and external factors, three distinct castes might have crystallized within the Jewish population.

While non-Jewish immigrant groups have also formed "ghettos" in the United States, they, or their descendants, moved away from them as soon as they struck root in American soil and advanced economically and socially. Jews, on the other hand, have found themselves moving from one Jewish neighborhood to another. The negative force of restrictive covenants and the positive force of Jewish mores have combined to maintain a kind of residential "ghetto." The existence of resorts, clubs, centers of recreation and similar institutions frequented exclusively by Jews, is due as much to the attitude of non-Jewish society as to the cohesive tendencies of the Jewish community. Discrimination against Jews in employment has given added impetus to the time-honored tendency of Jews to crowd into certain occupations, thereby checking their economic diversification. The majority of Jewish workers is probably

still employed in concerns owned by Jews; and Jewish professional men are largely dependent on Jewish clients. The "ghetto" follows the Jew from cradle to grave, with the cemetery ranking second only to the synagogue as a mainstay of Jewish communal organization.

Owing to the changing economic structure of the Jewish population and the impact of American democracy, the rift between the older and the more recent groups has narrowed considerably and is now in process of disappearing altogether. Little by little a collective Jewish life is emerging and obliterating the lines of demarcation. Distinctions of origin vanish as the numerical strength of the American-born generations grows, and as the socio-economic ascent of the immigrants from Eastern Europe proceeds.

All groups have contributed to the crystallization of the Jewish community in the United States. In the earlier days, it is true, each worked in a spirit of separatism. Indeed, no constructive achievement would have been possible had not each group built its own institutions in accordance with its needs and inclinations. Since the First World War, however, organized communal activities have been gravitating towards concerted action. Even the older organizations, which still cling to their separatism, are attempting to find points of contact with the corresponding societies in other groups. This trend will become increasingly clear as we sketch the evolution of the most important phases of communal life in the United States.

What distinguishes this communal life from that in the Old World is its purely voluntary basis. Considering this difference, the wonder is not that so many, but that so few have dropped out of organized Jewish life in the United States.

## II. RELIGIOUS LIFE

The synagogue was the earliest and most significant expression of Jewish communal organization in America. Its effort to adjust itself to local conditions has been a con-

siderable factor in the development of the Jewish community. In 1685 the Jews of New York set aside a house which they called their synagogue. By 1700 the Shearith Israel congregation, the first in North America, was already established. Not until 1729 did this congregation undertake the erection of a building. By the time of the Revolution there were five synagogues in the Colonies (New York, Newport, Charleston, Savannah and Philadelphia), all following the Sephardic ritual. Throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries there was no communal need which the synagogue could not satisfy, and the synagogue imposed a rigid discipline in all Jewish affairs.

The problem of adapting the spirit of Orthodoxy to American conditions presented itself from the very outset. The translation by Isaac Pinto, in 1766, of the Sephardic prayer-book into English heralded the rise of the Reform movement, almost 60 years before the Reformed Society of Israelites came into being in Charleston, South Carolina (1824). The early Reform Temple had little popular appeal; as an aristocratic institution it was far removed from most of Jewish life. It was only under the leadership of Isaac Mayer Wise, during the second half of the century, that the temple embarked upon a course of rapid progress. Subsequently, those elements that sought to adjust traditional Judaism to the new conditions of life but rejected the radical departures of the early Reform movement, developed Conservative Judaism. The Conservative movement had its institutional beginning in the founding of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 1886.

The Orthodox synagogue, too, which flourished among the East-European immigrants, gradually came to recognize that it was impossible to remain hermetically sealed against modern influences, and began to display an elasticity of its own. Today, Orthodox Jewry has its own educational system in the United States and re-

lies less and less on foreign countries to provide spiritual leaders.

Of the three Jewish religious groups, the Orthodox is numerically the strongest, followed by the Conservative wing, which outnumbers the Reform group. As regards influence in communal affairs, apart from synagogue activities, the order should probably be reversed.

The Reform group is unquestionably the best organized of the three. In 1945 there were 320 temples affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (founded in 1873); every Reform rabbi belonged to the Central Conference of American Rabbis (founded in 1889), which had 475 members. The Conservative synagogues are organized in the United Synagogue of America (founded in 1913), which had 350 affiliates in 1945. The Conservative rabbis are members of the Rabbinical Assembly of America (founded in 1900), which in 1945 had an enrollment of 354.

The Orthodox congregations are divided among several organizations, the most important of which is the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, founded in 1898. The largest Rabbinical organizations of this group are the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada (founded in 1902), with a membership of 500 in 1945, and the Rabbinical Council (founded in 1922 and reorganized in 1935), with 300 members, composed chiefly of rabbis educated in the United States. The great majority of the three thousand-odd Orthodox congregations are still unaffiliated with any central body, although the pace of integration has been proceeding at an accelerated rate among these groups in recent years.

Since the First World War the three currents have been drawing ever closer to each other. The Reform Temples have begun to show a greater appreciation of traditional values, have reintroduced Sabbath services, and have included more Hebrew in their ritual. The Orthodox synagogue, on the other hand, has begun to emulate

the temple both in architectural design and in regard to communal activities. The rabbis of the three types of congregation, as a rule, stem from the same social classes and generally share the same attitude toward Zionism and various other issues, a factor which has tended to blunt the sharply defined differences which still divide their congregations. All three currents are represented in the Synagogue Council of America (founded in 1925), which, while practically devoid of all organizational authority, symbolizes the religious consolidation of the American Jewish community.

The exact number of Jews affiliated with the synagogues is not known. The number of synagogues has increased in the past two decades in greater proportion than the Jewish population, but the average membership of the congregations has dropped. From a purely financial point of view the synagogue still represents the greatest communal asset of American Jewry. In 1936, 2,851 synagogues had their own edifices, 2,024 congregations reported the total value of their buildings as \$123,284,677. The annual budget of 2,159 synagogues reached the figure of \$14,404,427 in 1936. If we apply the average of these congregations to those which failed to report, we obtain an estimated expenditure of some 25 million dollars per year. In the course of the ensuing years this total may have approached 50 million.

The influence of religion on Jewish life in the United States cannot be measured in terms of synagogue membership. There are, throughout the country, various mass organizations which, though not directly tied to a particular synagogue, are essentially devoted to religious activities. If, moreover, one takes into account non-members who contribute to religious causes, it will be found that the majority of the Jewish population is, in one form or another, identified with religious institutions.

### III. SECULAR MOVEMENTS

With the beginning of Jewish mass immigration at the end of the last century,

popular movements and organizations of a non-religious type made their appearance for the first time. Their common ideological foundation was the conviction that the life of the Jewish people was not necessarily dependent on the continuity of its religious heritage. Three schools may be distinguished:

1. Those who hold that the Jews are a nation, whose religion is one of the chief factors in its existence, but by no means the only factor. Essentially, the Zionist movement falls into this category.

2. Those who stress Jewish culture, particularly secular culture of which the Yiddish language is the medium, as the main basis of Jewish national existence.

3. Conscious assimilationists or cosmopolitans, who hold that the Jews should lose their identity and be absorbed into the general population. This point of view has been upheld by certain sections of the Jewish middle classes and by a number of Jewish socialists and communists, but there is no longer an organized secular assimilationist movement.

The secular movements have provided a base in Jewish affairs for many Jews who are indifferent to religious activities. These new trends have stimulated cultural creativity and fashioned a network of organizations and institutions which rank among the outstanding Jewish achievements of the past fifty years.

Palestine, in addition to penetrating every phase of Jewish religious and social activity, gave rise to the Zionist movement, the largest and most widely ramified ideological movement among American Jews.

In recent decades, Zionism has emerged as one of the dominant tendencies in the American Jewish community, drawing its adherents from all walks of life by cutting across social and economic divisions. At the same time it has aroused opposition and brought into being militant anti-Zionist groups. With Jewish life in Europe increasingly threatened, with Palestine emerging as an ever more important center of Jewish immigration and colonization, and with the

practical problems of the upbuilding of Palestine setting Zionist philosophy in a different focus, opposition to Zionism in the United States has been waning.

Secularism prepared the spiritual and cultural atmosphere for the Jewish labor movement, which as an organized force began in 1885, with the founding of the Yidisher Arbeter Farein (Jewish Workers Club) of New York. The Farein, which represented the first attempt to direct the activities of Jewish workers as a class, lasted only a few years, but it paved the way for the Fareinigte Yidishe Gevekschaften or United Hebrew Trades (founded in 1888). In the same period the eighth branch of the American Socialist Labor Party organized the Jewish workers for political purposes.

Until the outbreak of World War I organized Jewish labor took no active part in general Jewish affairs. This, however, was bound to change as soon as American Jewry found itself confronted with the task of organizing relief for the Jewish communities in Europe devastated by the war. By that time the Jewish labor movement, influenced by the attitude of American organized labor, had abandoned the rigid interpretation of the class struggle, which saw in non-labor groups only class enemies. Another reason for the change of attitude was the influx of a number of Jewish immigrant workers, who, influenced by the new trends in the Jewish socialist and labor movement in Russia, brought with them the conviction that it was the duty of Jewish labor to assume responsibility for the fate and welfare of the Jewish people as a whole. Within the labor movement there emerged groups which considered the Jewish working class the guardian of everything that was constructive and valuable in the Jewish heritage. Gradually Jewish workers began to participate in all Jewish affairs. Today there is no aspect of Jewish communal life to which Jewish workers fail to contribute their due share.

As a result of various socio-economic changes, after the First World War, the

needle trades unions, which originally formed the backbone of the Jewish labor movement, ceased to be predominantly Jewish organizations. While the Jewish members of these unions still extend considerable support to Jewish causes and particularly to Jewish labor institutions, they have been largely superseded by organizations which formerly served as auxiliaries to the unions and political organizations of the Jewish workers. Among these are the fraternal orders, cultural institutions, relief agencies, political groups, publications, etc. Today these institutions are part of the mainstream of organized Jewish life in the United States.

#### IV. SOCIAL WELFARE

In the past two generations, philanthropy and social service have taken their place alongside religion as the chief unifying factors of organized Jewish life in the United States. With the growing need for social work and overseas relief, many who belonged neither to the synagogue nor to other Jewish organizations reestablished their contact with the Jewish community through the social agencies. These activities helped to forge new links between American Jews and Jewry abroad; moreover, they fostered a sense of personal responsibility in the individual for the welfare of the Jewish people.

Until a century ago there was little need for philanthropy within the Jewish group, and charitable activities could readily be handled in the Sephardic synagogues. In 1801 a Jewish orphanage, probably the first non-religious Jewish institution in the country, functioned in Charleston, South Carolina. Not until 1822 was the Hebrew Benevolent Society of New York formed by the leaders of the Shearith Israel congregation.

For the Jewish immigrants from Germany, however, philanthropy was a more serious concern. In the first place, there were not enough institutions to satisfy their needs, and, in the second, they felt ill at ease in those existing at the time of their

arrival. In 1844 they founded the German Hebrew Benevolent Society of New York, and about the same time they organized the Independent Order B'nai B'rith (1843), now the largest Jewish fraternal non-benefit organization in the world. In 1860 the Hebrew Benevolent Society of the Sephardim and the Germans' Hebrew Benevolent Society merged to found the United Hebrew Charities of New York, which exists today as part of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, the largest organization of its kind in the world.

By the end of the 19th century, a network of hospitals, homes for the aged, orphanages, and social service agencies was in operation, primarily as a result of the efforts of German Jews. The newly-arrived immigrants from Eastern Europe added new institutions, which not infrequently duplicated the activities of those already in existence: Just as the German Jews had not felt at home in the institutions controlled by Sephardim, those who came from Poland and Russia felt ill at ease in the institutions dominated by German Jews. The observance of the dietary laws was one of the major considerations in this connection.

With the exception of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), founded in 1885 with the aid of German Jews, the early charitable and social service agencies of the East-Europeans all bore a parochial, rather than a community, character. Their physical appearance was shabbier and their external apparatus shakier than the institutions administered by German Jews. In time they all came to feel the need for cooperation. Under the impact of the unifying factors, which gained force in Jewish life, segregation gave way to integration. The moment was ripe for the appearance of the all-inclusive federation.

While the first federation was founded in Boston in 1895, this type of agency really did not come into its own before the First World War. Today a federation exists wherever a Jewish community functions. It conducts centralized campaigns to fi-

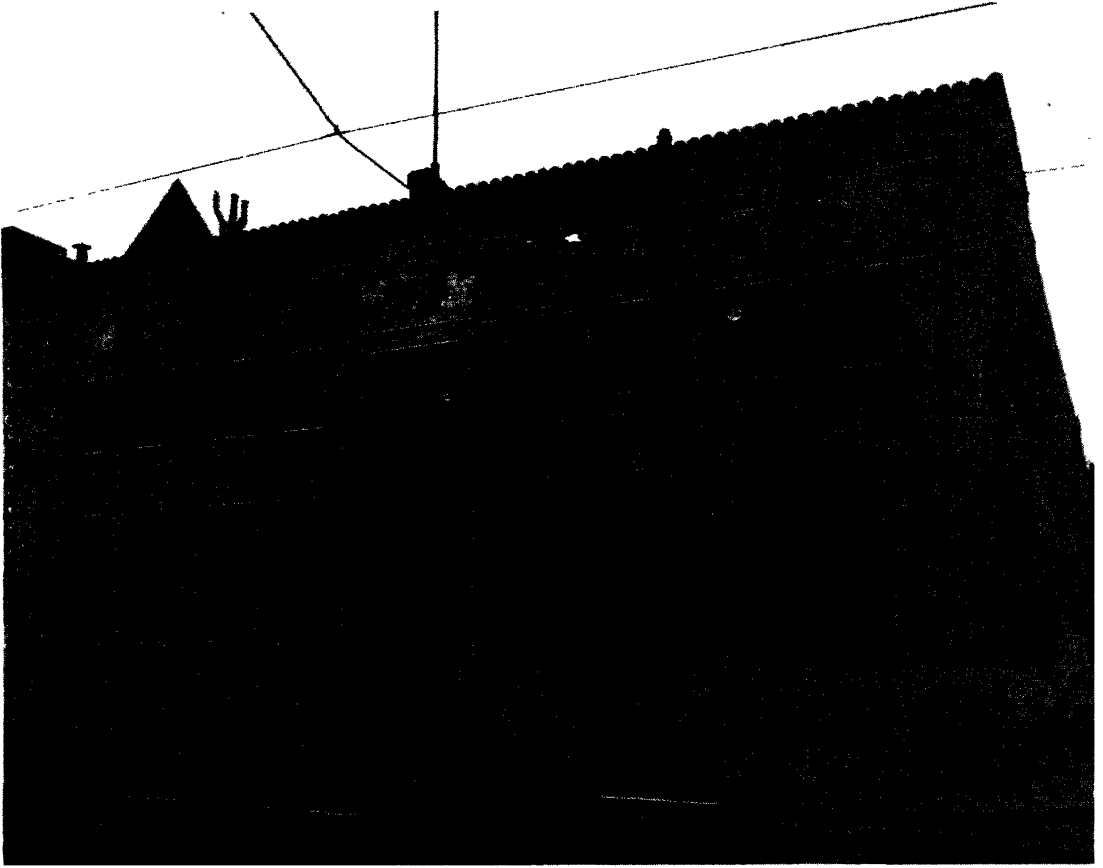
nance philanthropic and social work of a local nature. It also supervises the management of the institutions affiliated with it, without encroaching upon their autonomy in matters concerning ideology and program. The federation introduced more efficient methods of fund-raising and reduced the costs of administrative operation. It has facilitated the consolidation of the various Jewish groups in other spheres of communal endeavor. The federation also brought about a radical change in the relationships between the Jewish and non-Jewish communities: the development of similar institutions among other religious groups has led to the formation of the Community Chest which tends to embrace all organized social services on a local scale. Wherever a Jewish federation is part of the Community Chest, it shares in the proceeds of the latter in accordance with approved budgets. The authority exercised by the Community Chest extends only to matters of administration, leaving to the supported agencies full autonomy in the conduct of their work.

## V. OVERSEAS RELIEF

The federation paved the way for the Welfare Fund, which raises funds for countrywide and overseas Jewish causes. Essentially a product of the '30s and early '40s the rise of the welfare fund coincides with the advent of Hitlerism, which placed upon American Jewry overseas responsibilities of unprecedented magnitude. With few exceptions, all the welfare funds are affiliated with the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds (1932), which provides them with information and technical advice, and interprets for them such social trends as have a bearing on their work.

There are over 300 welfare funds in the United States, and they account for about 90% of the sums raised outside of New York for domestic and overseas causes. There is a marked tendency, particularly in the smaller communities, to combine the federation and welfare fund into one central fund-raising and planning body. This





FEDERATION OF JEWISH WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS IN LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

procedure prevails in practically every city with less than 10,000 Jewish population.

American Jews have constantly, and in ever-increasing volume, sent aid to Jews in other countries. When the synagogues raised and administered funds for philanthropic purposes, they included the support for European and Palestinian institutions as an integral part of their activities. From its very inception B'nai B'rith has, among other activities, been engaged in providing assistance to Jews overseas. This was also a major task of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites, to which reference will be made later, and has always been one of the chief functions of the landsmanshaften. The various Jewish socialist parties and labor groups in the old countries received support from the United States, and their appeals were the immediate cause of the

formation of a number of Jewish labor organizations in America.

It was not, however, until the First World War that overseas aid became a major task for the entire Jewish community. The distress in Europe, on the one hand, and the upbuilding of Palestine, stimulated by the Balfour Declaration, on the other hand, confronted American Jews with such demands that it was clearly beyond the power of any one Jewish group, or all Jewish groups working individually, to meet them. It was then that the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (1914), the largest voluntary relief agency in history, was organized. This was followed by the formation of the United Palestine Appeal (1936), and a number of other agencies for Europe and Palestine. The JDC and the UPA, together with the National Refugee Serv-

ice (since 1946 the United Service for New Americans), subsequently formed the United Jewish Appeal, and raised huge sums of money, over 90% of which was spent on relief and rehabilitation in Europe and Palestine. In 1946 the UJA raised 102 million dollars. Its goal for 1947 was 170 millions; and for 1948, following the decision of the United Nations to set up a Jewish State in part of Palestine, it set itself a minimum goal of 250 million dollars.

The social consequences of the fund-raising campaigns are certainly as significant as the financial. They play the most important role in uniting Jews of all political views, economic levels, and geographic origin. Among the various Jewish groups, the campaigns foster a sense of mutual respect and understanding. In a number of cities the welfare fund is, indeed, the sole enterprise in which all groups cooperate. Its leadership, as a rule, rests on a broader base than that of the Federation. To the extent that the scope of the welfare funds goes beyond charity and social service, and insofar as they also support ideological movements, the annual campaigns help to crystallize American Jewry's attitude toward general Jewish problems, which transcend the practical and immediate objectives of the annual campaigns. The part that overseas relief and Palestine play in consolidating the American Jewish community cannot be overstressed. It has always been easier to unite American Jews for action in behalf of Jews in other countries than for purposes pertaining to problems of Jewish life at home.

## VI. FRATERNAL ORDERS, LANDSMANSHAFTEN AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

With the arrival of great masses of impoverished Jewish immigrants, self-help and mutual aid became a problem of paramount importance. This led to the formation of fraternal orders, sick and death benefit associations, burial societies, etc. The first Jewish fraternal organization to

make mutual aid its chief function was the Order Brith Abraham, founded in 1859. As a result of a split in that organization, the Independent Order Brith Abraham, still in existence, was founded in 1887. The turn of the century saw the formation of a great number of fraternal orders, most of which, however, collapsed as soon as their organizational structures outgrew their precarious financial foundations. It was the workers' orders which showed greater endurance. Only one of these, the Independent Workmen's Circle, was liquidated, but its membership was absorbed by the Workmen's Circle. In 1945 there were eight fraternal orders with an aggregate membership of 241,079; three of these were labor orders with a total membership of 145,900. In addition to mutual aid, the orders, particularly those of the workers, devote much of their energy to social service and constitute an important factor in Jewish community life.

Among the landsmanshaften, which represent the most rudimentary form of Jewish social organization in the United States, three types may be distinguished: 1. societies whose functions pivot around a synagogue or another parochial religious institution; 2. organizations concerned primarily with mutual aid; 3. landsmanshaft branches or lodges of fraternal orders. In addition, there are several organizations of a mixed nature. Aid to their home towns has an important place in the work of all landsmanshaften and lends them their common character. According to a study conducted by the Jewish Writers' Group, working under the auspices of the Federal Writers' Project, New York had in 1938 about 3,000 landsmanshaften with a membership of approximately half-a-million.

The landsmanshaften have shown remarkable viability. The oldest of them, still surviving in New York, was founded by Dutch Jews in 1859. Despite the fact that the great majority of them consist mainly of Yiddish-speaking members, they have succeeded in attracting a fair number of American-born Jews. In 1938 the latter

formed 15% of the total membership of the New York societies, a much higher percentage than in the fraternal orders. Even more noteworthy is the fact that the *landmanshaften* within the fraternal orders have attracted proportionately fewer American-born members than those existing independently. The *landmanshaften* are becoming increasingly interested in general social activities. They serve as clubs for Jews in the lower-income brackets, for whom they provide a congenial atmosphere. It is for this reason that the *landmanshaften* have succeeded in keeping members of the most diverse affiliations and ideologies united under their roof.

Women have been forming auxiliary organizations to aid in synagogue and charitable work since the early part of the 19th century. It was not until the National Council of Jewish Women was founded in 1893, however, that a women's organization with an independent program and a place of its own in communal life came into being. Today there is hardly a religious, philanthropic, social or ideological group without a woman's division or sisterhood participating in its work. Some have developed into large mass organizations, which play a leading role on the Jewish scene. *Hadassah* (1912) is an outstanding example.

Numerous Jewish youth organizations are active in the United States but, like the women's groups, most of them are affiliated with religious or other organizations. The largest of the independent youth groups is the National Council of Young Israel, an Orthodox organization formed in 1912, which in 1945 had 70 branches with a membership of 25,000.

## VII. CIVIC DEFENSE

The defense of the civil, political and religious rights of Jews everywhere has been an important goal of all Jewish social endeavor in America, leading, in the course of time, to the formation of a number of special agencies concerned with such prob-

lems. By and large these organizations have devoted themselves to combating persecution and discrimination against Jews in a number of countries, and to the fight for the fulfillment of the Balfour Declaration. In addition, these agencies were also called upon to deal with anti-Jewish manifestations in the United States, and after the rise of Hitlerism in Europe, this work became the central task of several Jewish organizations, known as "Defense Agencies."

The Board of Delegates of American Israelites, founded in 1859, was the first purely defense organization set up in America. In 1878 it amalgamated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and was disbanded in 1925. By that time a number of new organizations had come to the fore, such as the American Jewish Committee (1906), the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (1913), and the American Jewish Congress (1917; reconstituted 1922). These, with the Jewish Labor Committee (founded in 1934), are the four major Jewish defense agencies now operating in the United States. Together with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Jewish War Veterans, and 24 local Jewish Community Councils, they form the National Community Relations Advisory Council, set up in 1944 for the purpose of co-ordinating activities in this field.

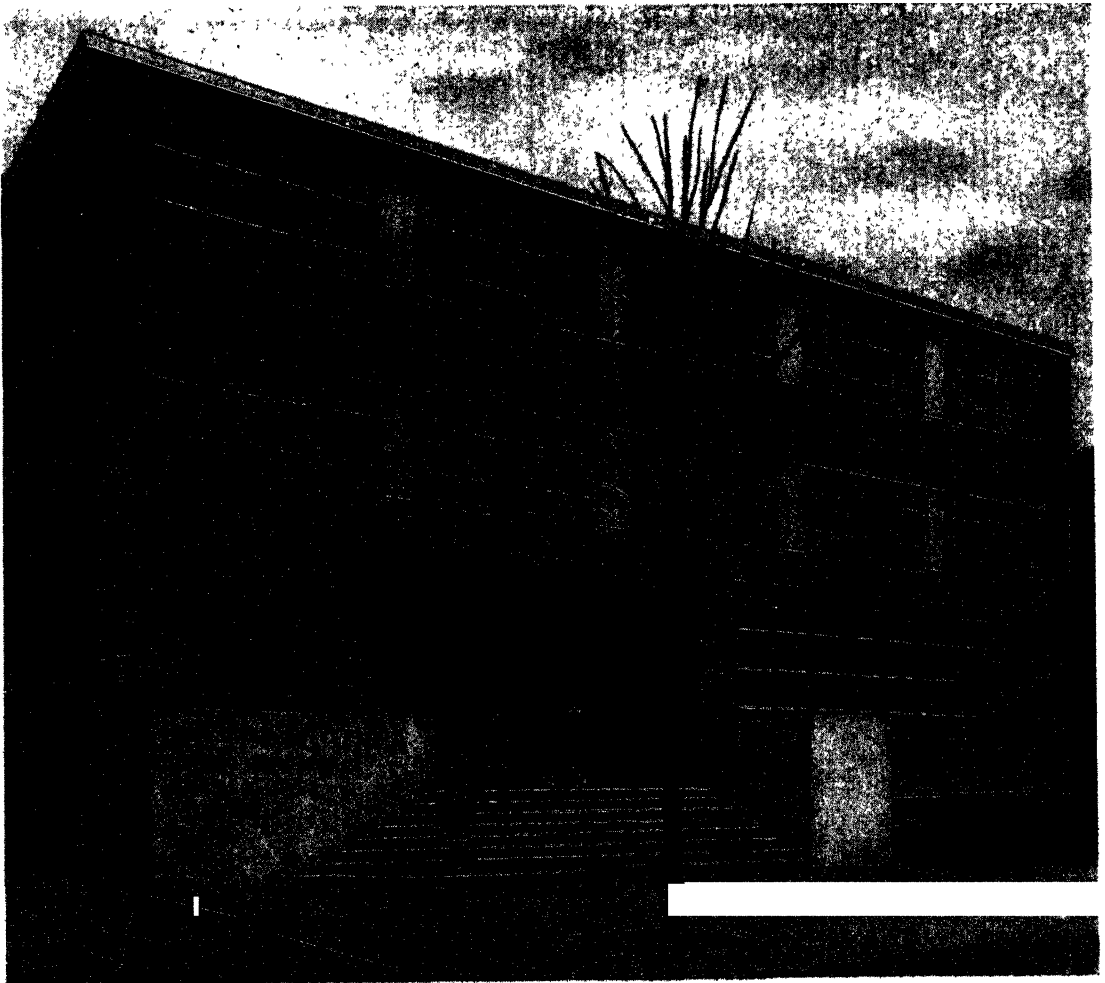
The community councils likewise owe their existence to the appearance of Nazism on the international scene. Their object is to combat anti-Semitism in their respective communities. They have been veering recently towards a more affirmative program by broadening the scope of their activities to include functions of a more positive nature. Community councils are now active in about 75 American cities; among these are some 50 which also serve as welfare funds and federations. Most of the councils are composed of individuals recruited from all segments of the Jewish population; there exist, however, a number of democratically elected councils.

### VIII. EDUCATION AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

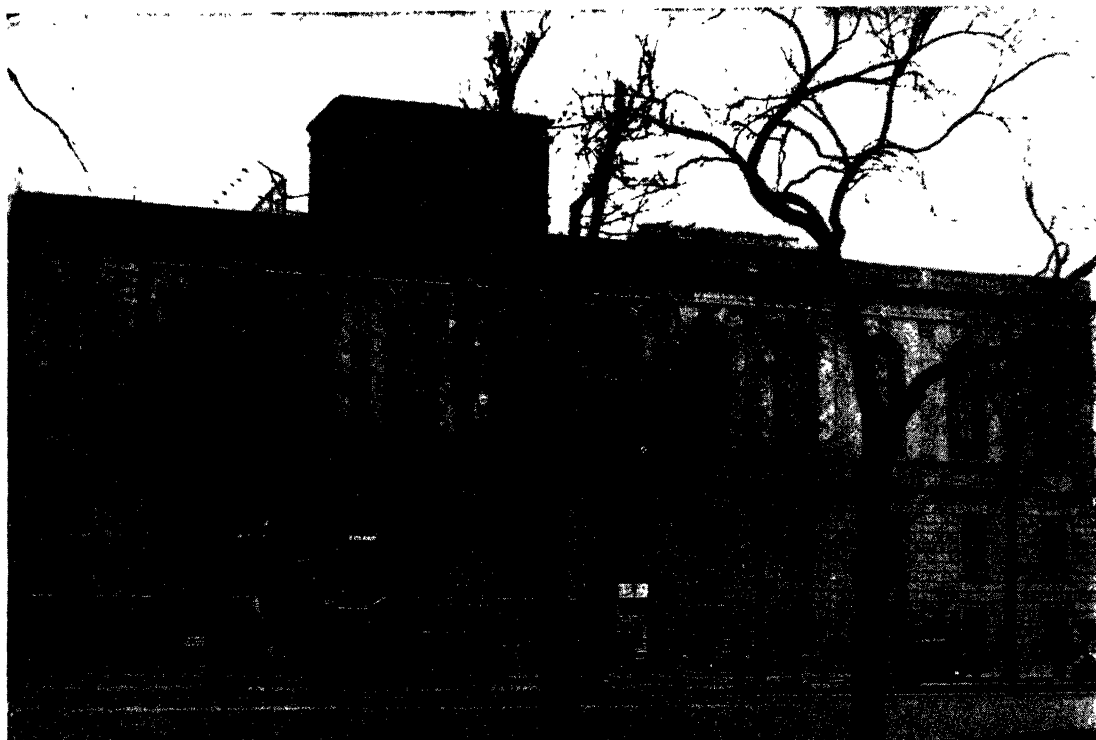
Jewish education has always occupied an important place in communal activities. Each group has built its own schools corresponding to the ideological views of the parents. It took a long time for the various schools to find a common ground and area of cooperation, but the trend toward integration finally brought them together. In a number of cities Boards of Jewish Education or Jewish Education Committees have been set up, either as independent bodies or as affiliates of federations or other central fund-raising agencies. They embrace all or most of the Jewish schools functioning in a given locality and follow the pat-

tern established in other fields of social service, i.e., co-ordination of efforts, sharing of experience, interchange of technical and intellectual facilities, unified public relations, and administrative supervision, without infringing on the autonomy of the individual school. The American Association for Jewish Education (1939) is forging ahead as a representative national body in this field. (See "Jewish Education in the United States" in this volume).

American Jewry also maintains a widely ramified program of adult education. The religious and Zionist organizations, as well as the radical groups and labor fraternal orders, have set up special educational departments which conduct public meetings,



MAX STRAUS CENTER IN CHICAGO

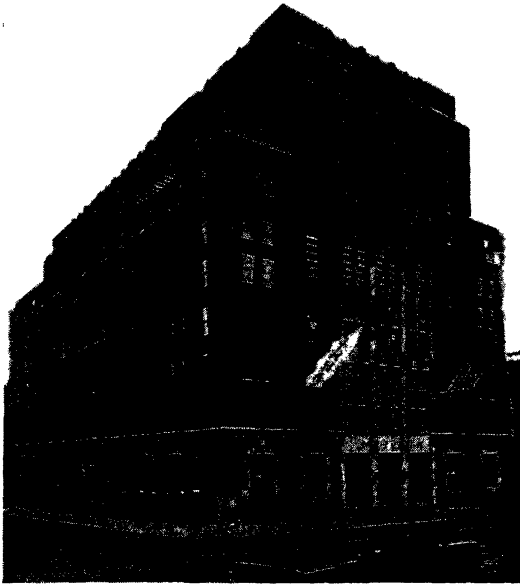


JEWISH CENTER IN BROOKLYN, N.Y.

seminars, lectures, and publish considerable literature. Hundreds of synagogues and other Jewish institutions maintain their own regular forums at which a wide variety of topics may be discussed. The Rabbinical schools and teachers' colleges provide higher Jewish learning and publish books dealing with Jewish religion, history, literature, philosophy and law. Several of the Jewish libraries in the country rank with the foremost libraries in the world. The Hillel Foundation Commission of B'nai B'rith conducts far-reaching cultural and religious programs among Jewish students in colleges and universities. The National Jewish Welfare Board, in addition to making provision for the religious needs of Jews in the United States Armed Forces, and serving Jewish Centers, maintains an agency to provide lecturers and literary and musical talent to Jewish organizations. It also sponsors the Jewish Book Month, and publishes the *Jewish Book Annual* in English, Hebrew and Yiddish.

Four daily newspapers in Yiddish and a number of periodicals in Yiddish and Hebrew, as well as some 140 weekly and monthly journals published in English constitute the press of the American Jewish community. To these may be added several publications appearing in German, Polish, Hungarian and Ladino.

The Jewish Publication Society of America, established in 1888, is the most important agency for the publication of books of Jewish interest in the English language. The Yiddish Scientific Institute (Yivo), in addition to carrying on adult education on a more advanced level, also publishes books in Yiddish on Jewish social and historical topics. Cyco (Central Yiddish Culture Organization) and Ykuf (Yidisher Kultur Farband) are endeavoring to give direction to cultural activities among the Yiddish-speaking masses. Cyco is also the publisher of the *Algemeine Entsiklopedie* (Yiddish) as well as this *Encyclopedic Handbook*. Histadruth Ivrit of America



HEADQUARTERS OF THE YOUNG MEN'S AND YOUNG WOMEN'S HEBREW ASSOCIATION IN NEW YORK

(founded in 1916 and re-organized in 1922) is dedicated to the promotion of the Hebrew language and culture, and carries on a corresponding educational program among Jewish youth and adults.

## IX. RECREATION

The recreational activities of American Jewry are becoming, as far as form is concerned, increasingly indistinguishable from those of the general population, but for the reasons mentioned above, Jews continue to maintain a network of their own recreational institutions. Social clubs, which reflect the economic stratification of American Jewry, may be found in spacious mansions as well as in dingy cellars. The labor groups have their own labor lyceums; most modern synagogues are equipped with special recreational centers, where concerts, dances, and other forms of entertainment are regularly featured. There is no social contact between the Jewish country club and the modest social club in the crowded street of the Jewish neighborhood, where Jewish youth dances to radio music or

phonograph records; both, however, follow accepted American amusement patterns, including sports, dramatic performances, etc.

Except for the relief and social service agencies, the Community Center is probably the most typical expression of Jewish communal consolidation in the United States. It is of comparatively recent origin, although it is derived from the Young Men's (and Young Women's) Hebrew Association, which had their beginning at the middle of the 19th century. Unlike the older Educational Alliance, where the emphasis was on Americanizing the Jewish immigrants, the Community Center is all that its name implies. In the smaller town it is not only the meeting place of the entire Jewish population; it is also the base from which all social activities are conducted, whether they be specifically Jewish or part of the civic life of the community at large. In this latter connection the Community Center also serves as a bridge between Jews and the non-Jewish population. Practically all Community Centers, Y.M.H.A.'s and Y.W.H.A.'s are affiliated with the National Jewish Welfare Board (founded in 1917), whose other activities are mentioned above. In 1947 there were 300 Com-



HEADQUARTERS OF THE YOUNG MEN'S AND YOUNG WOMEN'S HEBREW ASSOCIATION IN ROCHESTER, N. Y.

munity Centers and Y.'s with a membership close to 450,000; the overwhelming majority had their own buildings.

## X. CONCLUSION

Jewish communal organization in the United States did not develop according to any blueprint. It has been improvised as necessity arose. Therein lies its weakness and also its strength. Frequently communal organization has lagged behind events, and found itself unable to cope adequately with concrete situations. But, on the other hand, it has not been shackled to outmoded forms and has not been bound by stifling

traditions. It has been able to move about freely and to fit historical Jewish content into an American organizational framework. It has been pragmatic without lacking vision, utilitarian without being opportunistic. It has combined the sense of Jewish collective responsibility with the concepts of American individualism.

Today the Jewish community is still far from having completed its consolidation, but already it has proved that only through communal integration and organization can the American Jewish population discharge its obligations to itself and to the Jews of the world, while making most valuable contributions to the United States.

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# JEWISH LAW

Samuel Eisenstadt

## INTRODUCTION

- I. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOURCES
- II. THE PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF JEWISH LAW
  - 1. Criminal Law
  - 2. Civil Law
    - A. Social Legislation; B. Aliens and Slaves; C. Property; D. Neighbors' Rights; E. Obligations; F. Family Law; G. Inheritance and Guardianship.
  - 3. Procedure
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## INTRODUCTION

In Jewish history law occupies an even more prominent place than it did in ancient Rome, the principal source of jurisprudence in Western civilization. This is to be explained by the fact that the existence of the people of Israel as such was conceived at a very early period as an essential factor in its religion. The interdependence was clear: just as Israel cannot exist without its faith, so its religion in turn presupposes the existence of the people of Israel. Consequently, Israel's religion lays great stress on the concrete forms of social life, in particular on the legal system which must regulate the most divergent and conflicting private interests and constantly reconcile them, in accordance with the principles of equity, with the welfare of the nation as a whole. The basis of the Holy Scriptures accordingly consists of "statutes and judgments," "justice and righteousness." The most important part of the Scriptures, the Pentateuch, is the earliest history both of the nation and of its most sacred law, a record of the origins of its legal institutions. How deeply the idea of law and of a harmonious legal system penetrated into the minds of the people is evi-

dent from the dictum of Rabbi Simeon ben Gamaliel: "By three things the world is preserved: by truth, by judgment, and by peace." (Sayings of the Fathers I, 18.) Commenting, as it were, on this, the Talmud observes that "the three are one," for where the law is enforced, truth prevails and peace is maintained. (Perek ha-Shalom). In other words, the ultimate foundation of social peace is the rule of the true and just law.

All of the characteristics of Jewish law derive from the fact that it has its roots in the Jewish faith. Inasmuch as the supreme lawgiver is God Himself, the legal norms, the positive and negative precepts, receive a corresponding significance; the law ranks above the highest authorities in national life, including the anointed King. Indeed, not only the mighty of the earth but even "the Judge of all the earth," the Lord Himself, is bound by the fundamental principle of law (Genesis XVIII, 25). Thus, Jewish law acquired, in theory, a force independent of the state's boundaries, and extended its authority over all the members of the nation wherever they might dwell. Moreover, in the course of time certain norms were defined which applied not only to the Jews, but to the civilized world at large (the seven Noahian Laws), and which may be described as natural law (Sanhedrin 56); among these laws is the commandment to establish courts of law. The unlimited validity of Jewish law was an important factor in the consolidation of the Diaspora, enabling the scattered communities to retain their connections with the homeland and with each other by virtue of their common system of law.



The uninterrupted evolution of Jewish law over a period of almost 3,000 years—a cultural process without parallel in world history—is in itself a result of the close connection between the people's attitude to law and its religious tradition. For since, according to that tradition, the original norms are of divine authorship, they cannot be abolished by human beings; at the most they may be reinterpreted in accordance with the new requirements of the times. Consequently, the method of commentary, a new interpretation of an ancient text or of its accepted explanation, became the principal instrument in the enactment of new laws and the progressive development of juridical thought. The whole body of Jewish juridical literature, almost up to the present day, constitutes a great monument to this process. Each new layer encircles its predecessor like a ring and is in turn surrounded by a wider ring. In a sense even such legal codes as Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* (12th century) or Joseph Karo's *Shulhan Aruk* (16th century) are essentially a systematized interpretation of the older sources.

As a result of the central place occupied by law in the Jewish outlook, those forms of creative thought and effort, which in other civilizations remain strictly within the domain of law, achieved almost complete sway over the entire range of Jewish life. The spiritual possessions of the Jewish people consisted for a long time chiefly of a vast stock of norms: of a purely religious, ritual, ethical or hygienic, as well as of a legal character in the modern sense. Already in Talmudic times a distinction was made between the precepts governing the relationship between God and man, and those concerned with the relations between man and man. A system of law in the modern sense must deal chiefly with the latter sphere, and to a large degree it was law in the narrower sense that determined the development of Jewish social and economic life, whether in an independent state or in an autonomous group under foreign rule. Autonomy for Jews within the framework

of non-Jewish states always meant, above all, the privilege, recognized by the dominant power, to live according to Jewish law and to seek justice, in matters not involving non-Jews, in a Jewish court of law (*bet din*).

Jewish law which was always regarded as a means to a higher end—the preservation of the people—succeeded in avoiding the extreme formalism characteristic, for instance, of the older Roman law (*ius civile*). While the Romans taught that the formal requirements of justice must be enforced at all costs, Jewish law characteristically held that man was not created for the legal norms but that they were created for him, to enable him to lead a worthy life (Leviticus XVIII, 4-5; Deuteronomy XXX, 19-20). This notion harmonized with the principle of "the perfection of the world," or social progress. While Roman law is, as a rule, individualistic and therefore extremely cautious about restricting the rights of private property, Jewish law limits such rights by prescribing a variety of restrictions designed to benefit society, and above all to protect those who are socially the weaker. Thus, it gives concrete effect to its principal purpose, which is to safeguard the people as a whole down to its humblest member—the pauper, the stranger, the widow and the orphan. In accordance with this purpose, there developed in the Talmudic period a ramified social legislation, including a very detailed labor code, which enabled many communities to survive the most severe oppression in the course of their historic journey, and which even in the post-emancipation period remained, among the lower classes, one of the factors responsible for the preservation of tradition in its most intense form. By virtue of their distinctive system of law, Jews for centuries formed a kind of state within a state, and their scattered communities were consequently able, insofar as they possessed the means, to establish trade relations transcending far and wide the boundaries of single states. With the rise of the modern system of world trade and finance, the

wealthier Jews began to lose interest in retaining their inherited legal system, and thus the emancipation became the means of their liberation not only from the anti-Jewish but from the Jewish laws as well.

Although built on a completely independent foundation, and pursuing a distinctive course of evolution, Jewish law was naturally often influenced by other systems, and in turn contributed in no small measure to their development. Biblical law was influenced by the systems of the ancient Orient from the time of the Hammurabi Code (17th century B.C.E.), Talmudic law developed under the dual influence of the East (chiefly contemporary Babylonia) and of the Graeco-Roman world. In the Gaonic period, Islamic jurisprudence and, at a later age, the Christian systems exercised their influence on the Jewish courts and legal literature.

The extent of this foreign influence has not yet been thoroughly investigated. Even less attention has been given to the contribution of Jewish law to the development of other legal systems. Through the channels of the *ius gentium* (the law of nations), Hebrew laws undoubtedly found their way into Roman legal practice, especially after the translation of the Bible into Greek. Once the Bible became a part of the sacred scriptures of the Christians, its precepts acquired the status of "natural law" in the eyes of the Fathers of the Church. Thus, the prohibition of usury, for example, is merely a new formulation of the law found in Leviticus XXV, 36-37. The legal authority of the Bible continued to be recognized right into the modern era, as shown by the work of the outstanding 17th century jurist, Hugo Grotius. Talmudic and the later Rabbinic law, moreover, also found their way into Christian jurisprudence, chiefly because Jewish and Christian merchants in the Middle Ages often engaged in business transactions on the basis of Jewish legal principles, with both parties agreeing to submit disputes to the *bét din*. There is good reason to believe that in this way certain legal institutions,

destined to be of the utmost significance in the economic development of Europe, were introduced by Jews in accordance with their own civil law.

A. STEINBERG

## I. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOURCES

The seeds of Jewish law were contained in the customs which developed among Israelite tribes while still in the nomadic stage, long before they became a united people. These customs are reflected in the narratives about the patriarchs and in the accounts of the period preceding the establishment of the monarchy under Saul. Even at this remote period the connection between the national religion and law-making is already evident. The head of the family seeks guidance in divine revelation whenever he finds it necessary to supplement or change a primitive custom or to dispense justice to members of his clan. With the growth of the tribes the legislative function passes to the assemblies of heads of families (the elders).

Following the introduction of writing, the existing customs were written down as the laws of the nation. The oldest form of the written code is contained primarily in the so-called "Book of the Covenant" (Exodus XX, 19-XXIII, 33). This was supplemented by a kind of legislation, traces of which are found in the historical books concerning the era of the Kings; side by side with the religious element, "the word of God," there appears a new type of law, the king's decree. The reform carried out under the influence of the Prophetic party by King Josiah in 621 B.C.E. emphasizes social relations (see vol. I, pp. 116-117). In the insecure political conditions of the time, however, this reform could not last long. In the communities established by the exiles in Babylonia (after 586 B.C.E.) the spiritual leaders of the people, replacing the state, were the prophets, the priests and the elders, who prepared the ground for a theocratic system. This new constitution, in part drawn up by the Prophet Eze-

kiel, was introduced into Palestine by Ezra the Scribe. This was the "Book of the Law"—our Pentateuch—which he read to the assembly of the people in front of the Water Gate in Jerusalem in the year 444 B.C.E., and which the people swore to uphold.

Thereafter the legislative power, insofar as the written code left room, lay in the hands of the Great Assembly and subsequently, under Greek rule, of the Great Sanhedrin which, according to ancient custom, consisted of 70 members. At first these were mostly representatives of the priests, the Levites and prominent families, but after the victory of the Pharisees, who constituted the democratic party, the masses of the people gained representation in the supreme legislative body. In addition to interpreting the written law and promulgating various regulations (*takkanot*) or temporary enactments (*gezerot*) to meet the needs of the time, the Great Sanhedrin also exercised the function of a supreme court in political and criminal trials. After the destruction of the Jewish state the functions of the Great Sanhedrin were taken over by the academy at Yabneh, founded by Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai. The new institution, which had no state support to enforce its decisions, depended entirely on its religious and moral authority. Nevertheless, such was its prestige that it served to guide Jewish life not only in Palestine, but throughout the Diaspora.

The legislation of the Great Assembly and of its successors is known as the "oral law," which ultimately assumed written form in the Mishnah and Talmud. Other sources of Jewish law (in its later phases) are the responsa of the Geonim, the codes of the Posekim, the Rabbinic responsa, the statutes of individual Jewish communities or of federations of communities, the *takkanot* of Rabbinical assemblies, or of authoritative individuals.

## II. THE PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF JEWISH LAW

Jewish law has since antiquity been divided into criminal law and civil law,

which stand entirely apart from ritual legislation.

### 1. CRIMINAL LAW

The primitive institution of the "blood avenger" began to disappear as early as the beginning of the monarchy. From an early date Hebrew law took into account the intention behind the act—first in relation to homicide, and then also to lesser crimes—and recognized the right of asylum by designating places of refuge for persons who had shed blood without criminal intent. The fundamental principle of *ius talionis*—an eye for an eye—probably fell into disuse during the second half of the period of the Kings. It should be noted, however, that already according to the earlier laws contained in the Book of the Covenant, the payment of damages to the injured replaced imposition on the wrongdoer of a penalty identical with the injury caused to the victim. These damages included the expense of treatment and the loss sustained by the injured through interruption of work.

Under the influence of the Prophetic literature the concept of crime and punishment was in the period of the Mishnah (200 B.C.E.—200 C.E.) given a deep ethical basis, and the emphasis was transferred from the overt act to the guilty intention. The ancient principle of "uprooting the evil from thy midst" was replaced, first by that of instilling fear of the Lord ("that they may take heed and fear"), and later by the principle of arousing remorse and repentance.

A unique innovation in the penal code of the Mishnah is the formal warning (*hatraah*). No one might be brought before a criminal court unless he had been forewarned by two persons who had witnessed the act. The same two witnesses were required to prefer charges publicly and to testify in court. The element of warning, which was introduced in order to distinguish between negligence and criminal intent, infused a humane element into the penal code. Whereas in Roman as well as in modern law it is generally assumed that the accused knows the law—an assumption

which enables the state to punish every wrongdoer whether or not he had known that he was breaking the law—Jewish law established degrees of responsibility before the act. These varied according to whether or not the wrongdoer had express knowledge of the illegality of his action.

The Great Sanhedrin, which sought an ethical justification for punishment, restricted the scope of the death penalty, and voices were sometimes raised against capital punishment as such. The destruction of the state made Jewish criminal law largely theoretical. Yet, even at a later period the Jewish communities frequently utilized their autonomy to penalize those who had undermined the authority of Jewish law or had disregarded communal regulations. Such measures were applied in Babylonia in the Gaonic period (7th-10th centuries), with great frequency in Spain (11th-12th centuries), and afterwards also in Germany, Poland and Lithuania. The most important mode of punishment was the social boycott, either of the less severe type (*shamta, niddui*) or complete excommunication (*herem*). The traditional penalties of this period also included imprisonment and corporal punishment (*malkot*). In some Polish communities certain offenses were punished by exposure in the pillory (*kuna*).

## 2. CIVIL LAW

A. *Social Legislation*: From a very early period Jewish civil law was distinguished by social legislation of an advanced type. In Palestine private ownership of land was governed by the principle that land could never be sold in perpetuity but reverted to the original owner in the Jubilee year. The Sabbath was a day of rest for all laborers, regardless of nationality or social status. Every seventh year the soil was left fallow, and during the Sabbatical year the fruit and grain belonged to the public domain (*hefker*), to be enjoyed freely by all. In later periods communal officials collected the produce for distribution among all inhabitants of the district. The legal right of

the poor to receive aid was firmly established. Every third year a tenth part of the yield of the land was allocated for this purpose (*maaser ani*), in addition to portions of the annual harvest in the field or the orchard (gleanings, the forgotten sheaf, and the corner of the field), to which poor folk could help themselves.

B. *Aliens and Slaves*: As early as the most ancient Hebrew code the stranger was placed under the protection of the law. He had the same rights as the poor among the Hebrews and enjoyed the weekly day of rest. At the time of the Second Temple an alien who accepted the Jewish religion thereby acquired equal rights in communal life, provided he embraced the faith without ulterior motive. Aliens domiciled in Palestine, who did not become proselytes, were required to observe the seven Noachian commandments (not to steal, not to shed blood, to recognize the principle of law, etc.) which applied to all human beings.

According to Jewish law, only aliens could be serfs. The Book of the Covenant prohibited a Hebrew from entering into lifelong servitude. If he allowed himself to be sold, it meant that he had concluded a labor contract for six years. At the end of this period, the Hebrew slave not only regained his freedom, but received compensation from his employer, which provided him with the means to make a new start. If a slave refused to go free, he was taken to court, where his unworthy character was publicly exposed; his ear was pierced and he was proclaimed "a permanent slave." (According to the Talmud, even this status terminated at the next Jubilee year.)

Non-Jewish slaves (bought or captured), bondsmen in the strict sense, were not legal persons, and all that they acquired belonged to their masters. But cruelty to slaves was prohibited at a very early period. No man had the right to seize a runaway slave and return him to his master, and a slave maimed by his master was automatically set free. A slave could gain his freedom by accepting the Jewish faith. During the latter part of the Second Temple pe-

riod, as the economic importance of slavery diminished, slaves obtained the right to purchase their freedom.

C. *Property*: Jewish law gives unique significance to civil documents (*shetarot*), whose character as a kind of property was determined not by their physical substance but by their written contents.

As in other systems of law, a distinction was drawn between the property of a private person (*hedyot*), ownerless goods (*hefker*), the property of a community and that of the state (*tzibbur*, *hekdes*). The transfer of goods from private to public ownership was effected merely by the oral expression of the owner's wish (*amirah*), whereas a transfer from one private person to another was valid only after the goods had been handed over, at least symbolically. The oldest form of transferring property by barter gave way to more advanced methods during later periods, when the use of minted coins and international trade developed.

A particular property right could be established either by the principal or by his agent, freely appointed without formalities. As long as the agent had not completed his commission, either party to the agreement might withdraw by notifying the other. If the agent did not carry out his commission or carried it out unsatisfactorily, he was required to pay for the damage he had caused. He could recover the expenses connected with his commission in court only if he had definitely stipulated that his expenses must be met, or if he could show that his principals had profited as a result of his efforts.

D. *Neighbors' Rights*: In contrast to Roman law, according to which rights over the property of another could be established only with the consent of the owner, Jewish law recognized a number of easements (*shibudim*) independently of the owner's consent. Even the fundamental right of a landowner to transfer his property was not unlimited. Whenever a man wished to sell, rent or lease his land, his neighbor could exercise, on equal conditions, the privilege

of pre-emption. In this way a neighbor who had a small plot obtained the opportunity to add to his land, and a farm broken up into small parcels could thus be restored as a single holding.

The landowner was also prohibited from digging a well or planting a tree close to his neighbor's boundary. He was not allowed to construct a window overlooking his neighbor's premises without permission, or to open a shop facing the entrance to another's house; in either case he would be infringing on the latter's privacy. Where a house or a block of houses belonged to a number of partners, none might engage without mutual consent in any occupation likely to disturb the neighbor's peace (e.g., establish a school, a forge, a carpenter's shop, or the like) or put his share to any use inconvenient or detrimental to the others.

E. *Obligations*: Like the law of property, the law of obligation had an ethical basis, and was not hampered by the various formalities characteristic of Roman law. Obligations could be undertaken only in regard to goods that actually existed, and not in regard to things expected to materialize. Apart from certain exceptions, both parties were bound by their agreement only after the article had been delivered or the service rendered; performance by one party obliged the other to fulfill his part of the contract. Mere promises were not considered valid obligations. It was an offense to be over-punctilious with regard to formalities of an agreement to the detriment of the other party.

Talmudic law lays particular stress on responsibility for other people's property (objects found, borrowed or taken in pledge). The obligation to return lost property was subject to specific regulations (Deuteronomy XXII, 1-3). In Jerusalem the finder had to bring lost articles to a kind of lost property office. There is also the unique duty to render mutual assistance in the field and on the road: "If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden and wouldst forbear

to release it for him, thou shalt surely release it with him" (Exodus XXIII, 5).

The labor contract occupied a particularly important place among agreements giving rise to obligations. Biblical law requires the employer to pay the hired laborer his wage immediately after he has finished his work, "the same day; the sun shall not go down upon it" (Deuteronomy XXIV, 15). The Mishnah prescribes the legal conditions governing the labor contract, in respect of hours, wages, the workers' keep, etc. The jurists of that period, some of whom were themselves wage-earners, found an opportunity here to apply their conceptions of social justice. While the time spent in reaching the place of work was not paid for, the time needed to return home had to be reckoned as part of the working day. If on arriving the worker was unable to start working through no fault of his, or the work had already been done by others after he had been hired, he was still entitled to his wages. It was an offense to assign an unskilled laborer to a task requiring special technical skill, or to one injurious to his health. The worker could stop working without special reason (the right to strike), but when the work had to be finished speedily and the employer was unable to find a replacement, the worker was held liable for the damage incurred. If a dispute arose as to whether the worker had been paid his wages, his word was as a rule accepted in preference to the employer's.

F. *Family Law*: Jewish family law originally allowed polygamy. Although the economic position of the masses was not favorable to the development of polygamy, it did not completely disappear until it was forbidden in Europe by Rabbenu Gershom in the 11th century. Polygamy still persists, however, among Jewish communities in some Moslem countries. Polygamy placed the man on a level legally superior to that of the woman. In marriage arrangements the active steps were taken by the prospective husband. But he could marry a woman only with her consent, or if she was a minor,

with the approval of her father, or in the case of an orphan, with the consent of her mother or brothers.

In the peasant family of old the unmarried woman belonged to her father's home and was subject to his jurisdiction. After marriage she belonged to the home of her husband. A widow returned to her father's jurisdiction. Beginning in the late Talmudic period marriage contracts were drawn (*pesikta, shiddukhin*), in which both parties undertook to marry and specified the conditions of the marriage (dowry, date of wedding, clothing, gifts, place of residence). If the contract was broken, the responsible party had to pay the other a fine (*kenas*). In earlier times the bride's father handed over to her at the wedding the whole or part of the purchase price which he had received from the bridegroom and added his own gifts. All the wife had was the absolute property of the husband. Later some change was introduced through regulations which provided that the husband was entitled only to the use of his wife's property, so that in case of divorce or widowhood her property reverted to her. The wife could acquire property only if it were given to her on the express condition that her husband was to have no share in it. She then had the right to dispose of the property absolutely.

By an enactment of Rabbi Simeon ben Shetah (about 75 B.C.E.) every woman received at her marriage a written contract (*ketubah*), in which the husband undertook a number of obligations; the most important of these were the duty to provide her and her children with food, to ransom her if she should be taken captive, to provide her with medical care when necessary, and to pay her a definite sum in case of divorce. (If widowed, she was entitled to claim the same sum from her husband's heirs.) The husband often voluntarily (especially when he had received a dowry) undertook to pay her a larger sum than legally prescribed.

Until the 11th century, the husband could divorce his wife against her will.

Under the reform of Rabbenu Gershom, the husband could not obtain a divorce without the wife's consent, unless she was mentally ill or had refused to live with him.

**G. Inheritance and Guardianship:** Under the Hebrew laws, which were adapted to a patriarchal society, the male relatives were as a rule the heirs. The woman could not inherit her father's property, if any brothers were living. The firstborn son inherited a double portion, a provision later adopted in a number of Christian codes. The testator could alter the order of legal inheritance, within the limits of social justice, by a will drawn up in the presence of witnesses, but this document did not need to be legally registered. He could leave his property to total strangers or to social institutions by bequeathing the estate in the form of a gift, thus disinheriting his natural heirs; or he could reduce their legally-appointed shares in his property, or designate other relatives as his heirs. When a man was dangerously ill or his life was otherwise imperilled, he could make an oral will in the presence of two witnesses. Such a will became valid, however, only if the man died as a result of that illness or whatever other peril it was that impelled him to make the oral will.

The care of minor children and their education after the father's death became the responsibility of the mother, the elder brothers and other relatives. But control of the property of the orphans was vested in one or more guardians appointed in the will or by the *bet din*. The guardian looked after the property of the orphans and acted as their legal representative until they came of age. (For boys, after the Babylonian Exile, this was fixed at thirteen.) The guardian could not, however, assume any obligations nor engage in any litigation on behalf of his wards, for this might involve them in losses. A guardian appointed by the father to administer the property of his heirs was not required to render an account of his activities. On the other hand, one appointed by a *bet din* was accountable to this court.

### 3. PROCEDURE

**A. General Principles:** The fundamental rules of court procedure are laid down in the Bible: the judges must be impartial; the litigants must be absolutely equal before the law; there must be no bribery, which "blindeth them that have sight and perverteth the words of the righteous" (Exodus XXXIII, 8). The judicial activity of Moses, the ideal figure of the legislator and judge, is based on these principles. Among the kings it is Solomon who appears as an ideal royal judge.

Talmudic law and Rabbinic legal practice broadened and deepened the ethical foundations of court procedure. The litigants must appear before the court clad alike, so that the richer should not put the poorer to shame. The judge must be equally patient and attentive to both. He must ask them both to sit or to stand; he must not hear any case out of turn, unless it concerns a widow or orphan; a woman's cause must be heard before a man's, and the scholar engaged in study has priority over other pending cases. The judge has to hear both parties before deciding the case. The definition of bribery was extended to cover flattery of the judge.

During the period of the Second Temple criminal cases were tried by local Sanhedrins of twenty-three members. Important political or religious trials came before the Great Sanhedrin of seventy-one judges in Jerusalem. Civil disputes were brought before the professional judge (*mumheh*) or before courts of arbitration.

**B. Criminal Procedure:** Criminal judges were required to have exceptionally high moral and intellectual qualifications. A proselyte born of a non-Jewish mother was disqualified, on the ground that he was not sufficiently acquainted with the life of the people and had not been trained in its spirit; similarly an elderly man (because his memory might be faulty), and a man without children (because he might be too severe) could not serve as judges in criminal cases. The judge also had to know all

the languages of the country, so as not to require the assistance of an interpreter.

Criminal procedure was based on private accusation. No person could be brought before a criminal court until charges had been preferred, and the trial could begin only with the appearance of the accuser. The laws of evidence in general, and the laws concerning witnesses in particular, were worked out in great detail. Before the witnesses appeared they were solemnly warned that they would bear absolute responsibility for all they said. During the hearing they were asked a series of skillfully formulated questions. Women were as a general rule not permitted to testify. A woman could prefer charges only in the case of the murder of a near relative.

The consultation of the judges and the voting on the verdict had to take place in public, both in criminal and civil trials. The accused and his witnesses were removed from the courtroom before the consultation began, so that there should be no occasion for arousing personal animosity against judges who voted for conviction. A majority of one was sufficient for acquittal, but a verdict of guilty required a majority of at least two. If no argument could be found in favor of the accused, the trial was adjourned until the next day, so that the judges might further have a whole night to consider the matter. After the trial was concluded, the public was emphatically exhorted to come forward with any evidence they had in favor of the convicted person. In the case of a death sentence, horsemen were stationed along the road from the court to the place of execution to give the signal to stop the execution should someone suddenly arrive at the court with new evidence. Before the death sentence was carried out the convicted person was urged to confess, so that all doubt might be resolved and the judges' conscience relieved. For the same reason the accuser had to assist personally in carrying out the sentence. A full record of the court proceedings was kept by two court-scribes.

C. *Civil Procedure*: Civil procedure was free of formalities and did not depend, as in Roman law, on an agreement of the litigants to bring the action before an official court of justice. The judges personally mediated between the parties, and their verdict needed no confirmation.

The rule was that the judge could deal only with what his eyes saw. The judges began by asking the litigants whether they preferred to seek a compromise or to have the issue decided according to the strict letter of the law. Jewish law considered that peace is fully restored only when complete mutual understanding is reached by the litigants.

The procedure of the court dealing with misdemeanors was of a more formal character. This court was a state institution. All the judges were professional jurists, whose qualifications had been certified by recognized authorities, while in routine civil trials there were also lay judges.

Civil cases were tried by a court of not less than three judges. A single professional judge sufficed, however, if he enjoyed a sufficient degree of confidence and authority in the community. But as a general rule a decision by one individual was contrary to the Jewish religious conception, according to which, "None may judge alone save One" (Sayings of the Fathers IV, 10).

D. *Evidence*: The burden of proof rested on the plaintiff. Those who failed to submit convincing evidence to the court were given thirty days' time for the purpose. The evidence had to be objective and positive, and might under no circumstance be based on inference or supposition. Witnesses and documents constituted valid evidence. The testimony of two or more adult Jews was required; these witnesses had to be persons who were not related to either of the litigants and were neither their friends nor their enemies. The court admitted only testimony based on the direct knowledge of the witnesses rather than on hearsay. Witnesses were heard singly, but were not examined as closely as those testifying in a criminal trial.



E. *The Oath*: The oath was administered to a litigant as a means of ensuring his acceptance of moral responsibility. This was done only when no objective proof was obtainable. Thus, if the plaintiff failed to produce convincing evidence in support of his claim the defendant did not have to pay if he took the oath. In cases where the law placed more confidence in the plaintiff than in the defendant (a worker's claim for wages, a charge of robbery, or a merchant suing to collect a debt entered in his books), it was the plaintiff's oath which was decisive. If there was any ground for suspicion that a litigant might swear falsely, the oath would be administered to the other party. Thus the oath was not administered to one known to have sworn falsely on a previous occasion, or whose habitual conduct was objectionable (usurers, gamblers, etc.); in general, any person regarded as likely wrongfully to claim possession of another's property was disqualified. In special cases, in which the integrity of the plaintiff or defendant had to be established beyond all doubt, one of the litigants had the right to demand that the other take the oath. Thus, a trustee who had been appointed by the court might be required to swear that his accounts were correct. A husband who had authorized his wife to carry on his business could also demand that she confirm her accounts under oath before the *bet din*.

### III. MODERN RESEARCH

The scientific study of Jewish law began at the time of the Renaissance, in the humanistic period (16th - 17th centuries), when enlightened Europe was seeking inspiration in the social and ethical foundations of the ancient world. Treatises were written in Latin by non-Jewish theologians (German, Dutch, English), the most important being Calovius, Bertramus, Schi-cardus, Surenhusius (translator of the *Mishnah* into Latin) and John Selden. The end of the 18th century saw the appearance of the six-volume work on the Mosaic Law, *Das Mosaische Recht* (1769-1775) by

Johann David Michaelis, which has not entirely been antiquated to this day. In the course of the 19th century the so-called historical school of law in Germany (Savigny and others) aroused the interest of German-Jewish scholars in the history of Jewish law. The researches conducted by Jöst, Geiger and Zunz prepared the ground for the investigation of Biblical and Talmudic law by Joseph Lewin Saalschuetz, Israel Michael Rabinowicz, Zacharias Frankel, Hirsch Baer Fassel and others. At the same time Joseph Salvador was working in France in this field.

Towards the end of the 19th century Jewish scholars studied Jewish law essentially from the Jewish national-political viewpoint. Under the influence of Zionism some of them tried to adapt this material as a basis of Jewish legislation in Palestine. Since 1894 a number of treatises by Jewish jurists have appeared who have systematized various branches of Talmudic law according to the basic concepts of modern jurisprudence. Professor Josef Kohler has given considerable space to these subjects in his *Zeitschrift fuer vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft*. Gradually studies on Jewish juridical questions found their way into all the German, French and English journals devoted to the Jewish past, as well as into the Jewish encyclopedias.

Simultaneously with this research work began the teaching of Jewish law in the modern yeshivah in Odessa, under Rabbi Chaim Tschernowitz. In 1916 the society *Ha-Mishpat ha-Ivri* was founded in Moscow for the purpose of fostering scientific research in Jewish law. Its activity was interrupted in 1918 but was renewed in 1923 in Jerusalem, where the Society published general comprehensive works and also the periodical *Ha-Mishpat* (The Law). The Government Law School in Palestine, which was founded in Jerusalem in 1920, included in its curriculum the study of Jewish law, to enable Jewish lawyers to practise before the Rabbinical courts. In addition a college for Jewish jurisprudence was founded in Tel Aviv in 1934.

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# JEWISH MORALS

A. Steinberg

1. Introduction
2. The Godlikeness of Man
3. The Impact on the Law
4. Israel and Humanity
5. Peculiar Features of Jewish Society
6. Personal Relations within the Community
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The survival of the Jews as a coherent community is generally attributed to their religion and their peculiar morality. Opinions may differ widely as to the intrinsic value of this morality; no one, however, will question the fact that Jewish society, since time immemorial, has been based on certain moral principles typical of this group and of this group alone. To those who regard true morality as a standard of general human conduct fundamentally independent of historical antecedents, the distinctive character of Jewish morals may appear deficient by definition. However, this is a matter to be examined only after the essence of Jewish morality has been clearly defined. Jewish believers, those who abided by the law of their fathers, for their part, deprecated any attempt to reduce the mass of commandments, precepts and regulations to general moral principles. To them, every distinction between morality and legality within the flow of religious tradition meant lowering the status of obligatory law as against the dictates of the heart. Inspirations of this kind, as reflected in Musar, Aggada, Midrash, were at best regarded as substitutes for or acces-

sories to the law. It was only in times of crisis and spiritual confusion that Jewish moralists raised their voices, and even then their guiding maxims were: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge," and "My son, forget not my law" (Proverbs I, 7 and III, 1). Any investigation into the essence and development of Jewish morals must thus first establish the place actually occupied by morality within the compact reality of Jewish history, and its true relation to the accepted sacred law.

This historical approach, far from conflicting with the traditional Jewish attitude, may make the latter comprehensible even to those who are indifferent to the validity of the Law. In the written history of ancient Israel all crucial moments are presented as landmarks in legislation (cf. Jewish Law, Introduction). The lawgiver and supreme judge is God, and His will is revealed to the people through His faithful servants. No other authority exists to draw a line between right and wrong, between good and evil. As far as the people itself is concerned, its own moral attitude and ability to tell good from evil are generally presented as vitiated by blind impulses and an innate want of constancy. The people is "stiffnecked," readily deceived by false prophets and seduced by "other gods." In their natural morality the Children of Israel are thus merely descendants of Adam, of man in general, of whom it is said that "the imagination of his heart is evil from his youth" (Genesis VIII, 21). Left to itself and to its own instincts, without the guidance of divine law, the people would succumb to the forces of evil and cease to exist. This basic conception of the

natural weakness, if not wickedness, of the human heart, and of its constant need for a legal harness, underlies the Hebrew Bible from beginning to end. It may be assumed that the Scriptural exposition of Israel's ancient history was in itself influenced by an unyielding mistrust of morality as an independent factor in human progress. This mistrust of natural morals inevitably determined the moral and ethical reasoning of the post-Biblical generations. Encloistered in its legal armor, Judaism became suspicious of its own moral vigor and preferred to by-pass it in silence. Not until the age of Emancipation, the time of its self-imposed disarmament, did the Jewish people feel an urge to speak to itself, as well as to the world at large, of the moral foundations of its real existence.

Seen in historical perspective, these foundations stand revealed in their true light. They cannot be of a later origin than the original community built upon them. The order of social creation cannot be reversed: the community always precedes the legal principles which it is challenged to implement. Even as a divine revelation the Law is assigned to a "chosen people," a people predisposed to accept it. This, as is well known, is the established doctrine of the Bible. Powerful as may have been the opposition of the moral élite, which speaks through the Bible, against the immorality of the people, to the historian this moral aristocracy is still bone of the people's bones and flesh of its flesh. Good laws could not have been assigned to an altogether bad people, and must consequently be credited, at least in part, to the moral atmosphere in which they were engendered. And what is true of the Biblical period of Jewish history is no less true of the later periods. Side by side with the evolution of Jewish law, and interwoven with it, went another process by which the moral principles, whether already embodied in legal statutes or still tending toward such embodiment, found an ever higher degree of clarification. It seems obvious, then, that a reconstruction of the

Jewish past from a strictly historical point of view has to concentrate no less on this moral evolution than on the more easily traceable advancement of the Jewish law.

A comprehensive exploration of the inner moral fabric of Jewish life in its development through the centuries will have to take cognizance of every force which determined that life, be it from within or without. Charity, for instance, becomes a different proposition in a community deprived of solid economic foundations, as compared with the practice of the same virtue under more normal economic conditions. Thus, the evolution of Jewish charitable institutions and the prominence they have gained within the general framework of Jewish morality remain a historical enigma, unless viewed against the background of the external factors which have shaped the political destiny of the Jewish people. And the same is true of almost every other characteristic feature of Jewish morality.

As to the sources to be consulted, clearly the history of Jewish law, or more precisely, the sources of that history, must take precedence over every other kind of historical testimony. One illustration may suffice: at a very early period of Israel's history a measure of legal protection against the "avenger of blood" was accorded to the "manslayer that killeth unwittingly and unawares" (Numbers XXXV, 11-34; Joshua XX, 2-9). Whatever else this legal innovation may have signified, the curtailment of the private right to avenge blood with blood indicates that the primitive moral notions of human responsibility, guilt and duty were at that time undergoing a process of reformation in Israel. And when we learn that centuries later even the judicial imposition of capital punishment was circumscribed in such a manner as to make it almost impossible (e.g., see Mishnah Sanhedrin, IV-V), we have every reason to assume that in the period between the canonization of the Torah and the codification of the Mishnah, the value placed on individual human life was

steadily increasing. Is there a more reliable yardstick for measuring moral progress than the actual price, fixed in terms of law, which society is prepared to pay for each individual's right to live?

The continuous and well-documented history of the development of Jewish law provides the explorer of Jewish morals with a never-failing guiding thread. True, he may sometimes question whether or not the promulgation of a certain law can be taken as an adequate reflection of the moral climate of the time. For just as laws are often merely forerunners and stimuli of moral progress, so may they sometimes lag behind or retard it. However, such difficulties are more likely to confront the historian who probes the morals of a society during a limited period of its evolution. The explorer of Jewish morals, on the other hand, confronted with an uninterrupted process of three thousand years, is justified in dealing with periods of such length as enable him to draw general conclusions. No law can stand the test of time if it is not congruous with the general trend of morals within the community which gave it birth, and no community will, in the long run, suffer an ancient law to persist unless it be adaptable, by way of interpretation, to higher levels of moral achievement. This, incidentally, is the story of the Ten Commandments with their enduring moral significance both within and beyond the Jewish world.

The clue to the problem of what moral teachings, as distinct from the accepted law, contributed to the actual reformation of Jewish moral life may often be found in liturgical literature. The composition of the Jewish prayerbook reflects a concurrence of factors of which the most important, apart from Law, are the moral and ethical tenets approved and gradually absorbed by the mass of the people. Though formed by law and comparable in some respects to a legal code, the Jewish prayerbook testifies to the permeation of the whole community by the loftiest moral ideals of its spiritual guides. Generation

after generation could not have prayed for the transfiguration of "all creatures" into "one unit," as is done annually on New Year's Day and the Day of Atonement, had not the idea of universal brotherhood become an integral part of Jewish morality.

Like the morality of every other community, that of the Jews had to pass through a succession of stages. Their conceptions of the ideal man, of the good life, of the moral tasks of the community as such, of its obligations toward other communities, of the duty to translate solemn exhortations into deeds, and the coordination of all these concepts within the framework of one morality—all this was the product of a long and extremely painful process. At its end, marked by the first codification of the "oral law," the Mishnah (about 200 A.C.E.), we find that the people's heart had undergone a tremendous change. The lawless, quarrelsome, rebellious nation of the Bible had disappeared. "Since the destruction of the Temple, prophecy has been suspended" (Babyl. Talmud, Baba Batra, 12b)—there were no prophets left to castigate the people, and no people to stone its prophets. Scribes and Pharisees—the successors of those who in the days of old had poured out their wrath upon a sinful people—and the people itself had merged into one. Nothing short of a miracle—not recorded in our sources—could have brought forth this unity, had not the body politic itself been singularly receptive to the Prophetic ideals. At least from the time of the Babylonian Exile, the discrepancy between Jewish law and Jewish life, however great it may have been before, diminished steadily, and the morality of the people began to take shape. Henceforth the community knew what it was living for; and its members realized that their mutual relations, as well as their relations with non-Jews, ought to be built upon this knowledge. They gained an ever clearer idea of who and what should be qualified as "good," what should be aspired to and emulated. At the conclusion of the Mishnah, the Jewish moral ideal had fully emerged and the

essence of Jewish morality had grown into a force decisive for the entire future of the people. The end reveals the beginnings. From the viewpoint of the history of morals, all that preceded was but a succession of preparatory stages tending towards this final realization; and all that followed, but a sequence of attempts to bring the adopted moral ideal to an ever higher degree of materialization, to implant, as it were, the rediscovered "tree of knowledge of good and evil" in the firm ground of ordinary human life.

## 2. THE GODLIKENESS OF MAN

The quintessence of Jewish morals is the belief that man is created "in the image of God" (Genesis I, 26) and that his human dignity derives therefrom. This belief underlies the Biblical idea of the universal fellowship of men and of their mutual obligations. Their common likeness to the Creator is their indissoluble bond. Though "formed of dust" and destined to "return unto dust," all sons and daughters of Adam breathe the same spirit, that "breath of life" which is their "portion from above" (Genesis II, 7 and III, 19; Job XXXI, 2, XXXII, 8 and XXXIII, 4; Zechariah XII, 1; Isaiah XLII, 5). In the order of creation man is thus both the last and the first; condensed "earth" (the name "Adam" derives from "adamah"—earth) and part of heaven; animal and angel. He is nearest to God in his faculty "to know good and evil" (Genesis III, 22), because this knowledge makes him free to choose one or the other, and by the assertion of his freedom he, a creature, becomes himself creative—like his Maker.

It is difficult to say precisely when this Biblical doctrine of man's twofold nature first captured the people's mind, so as to affect its everyday life. But in retrospect, looking back from the moral heights reached by the fathers of the Mishnah, universal history, both in its political and spiritual aspects, appears determined by the revelation that man is half beast, half God, and that it is his own fault if the earthly

part of his nature outweighs the celestial; if he gives ear to the voice of his subhuman rather than his superhuman component. In accordance with this moral conception, the misfortune of individuals as well as of entire peoples was explained by their inability to strike the balance between the two extremes. It was this failure, too, which condemned Israel to undergo successive catastrophes. Its past had already been presented in this light by the Prophetic school, whose exponents painted the people in darkest colors, now so arrogant as to challenge the Almighty Himself, now so depraved as to descend to the level of beasts. This exposition of history had sunk deep into the people's consciousness, and after the restoration of its autonomous life in the 5th century B.C.E., the Jewish community was resolved to side with the forces of good. Conformity with the divine law became the criterion for the right choice between good and evil. Thenceforth this first principle was implied in the people's morality.

How acute the consciousness of the god-like character of man became by then can be judged by the general tendency governing the evolution of the "oral law." The rigid formulae of the inherited written law were interpreted and re-interpreted in such a way as to make them adaptable to specific circumstances of individual life. The severe sanctions of the ancient criminal law gradually fell into disuse. "A Sanhedrin (the Supreme Court) which pronounces one death sentence in seven years," says the Mishnah, "deserves to be called murderous. Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah says: 'One in seventy years.' Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Akiba say: 'Had we been in the Sanhedrin, no man would ever have been put to death'" (Makkot I, 10). Thus high had the price of every human life risen, even the life of one against whom there was strong evidence of guilt deserving the death penalty. A formula never before heard was coined: Man equals World; a formula deduced from the very story of the Creation: "Man was created as a singular (i.e., in con-

trast to the animals which were created 'after their kinds') in order to teach thee that whosoever annihilates one of the sons of Adam is deemed by Writ as though he had annihilated a whole world, and whosoever sustains one of the sons of Adam is deemed as though he had sustained a whole world" (Mishnah Sanhedrin IV, 5). These words firmly established the foundations for the essential moral idea that every human being is a microcosm in himself.

At the same time another great discovery was made: the absolute uniqueness of every human individuality. The same Mishnah continues: "(Man was created as a singular) in order to reveal the greatness of God. Unlike man whose coins, if stamped with the same seal, are all alike, the King of Kings has stamped every man with the seal of the first man, and yet, not one of them is like unto the other. Therefore, it behoves each man to say: 'The world was created for my sake'" (*ibidem*, in fine). In other words, every single human being is as unique as the Father of the Universe.

The universalism of this moral idea, presented—anonously—in conjunction with its correlated and strongly emphasized individualism, must be conceived as the final result of the people's education in the spirit of its sacred literature. From the Patriarchs' Saga down to the Psalms, the Bible abounds in vivid presentations of individual human characters, shown with all their virtues and vices, their hopes and fears, their holy aspirations and diabolical depravities. The Bible thus opened the eyes of the people to the phenomenon of human personality. Only against this literary background does the discovery of man's uniqueness cease to appear as a miracle in itself.

### 3. THE IMPACT ON THE LAW

The written law of Israel did not evaluate the relative worth of its integral parts. One could, therefore, assess the greater or lesser importance of the various commandments only indirectly and approximately, for instance, by comparing the respective

sanctions threatening the transgressor. The oral law, however, introduced an essential distinction between them—one of the most striking examples of the impact of general moral ideas upon legislation: against the commandments governing relations "between man and God" it sets those concerning relations "between man and his fellow." And what is more, the latter appear to rank higher than the former. The classical passage which refers to this distinction as to a well-digested general idea, reads: "From transgression between man and God Yom Kippur cleanses; from transgression between man and his fellow-man Yom Kippur does not cleanse, unless the transgressor has reconciled his fellow-man. Thus did Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah interpret the verse (Leviticus XVI, 30), 'From all your sins before the Lord shall ye be clean'" (Mishnah Yoma VIII, 9). With this restrictive interpretation of the Torah's phrase "sins before the Lord" a new category of "sins before man" was established, and man achieved godlikeness in a new respect, being invested with the power to forgive or not to forgive offenses committed against him by his fellow-man. Without presupposing a steady moral development towards such a deeper apprehension of the idea of man's godlikeness, the quoted Mishnah would have to be classified as an anti-religious manifesto. In reality, it signifies but another step in the moral progress of the Jewish people.

The new disjunction implied one of the most far-reaching consequences in inter-human relations. Murder, for instance, became literally unpardonable, at least in this world. For to pardon his murderer, the murdered man would have to be resurrected, since under divine law even the Lord Himself appears divested of the right to act for the victim. No wonder that in the community in which this conception prevailed, murder became worse than a crime—a life-long curse brought down by man upon himself. The very idea of shedding blood became horrifying. No sane man could envisage the commission of a

crime which would automatically rebound upon himself.

It was probably by this time that the ancient Jewish idea took root that "the Sabbath is for man, not man for the Sabbath." The Talmudic parallel to this Evangelical dictum is: "Preservation of life pushes Sabbath aside," that is to say, the very sanctity of the holiest day must retreat before the sanctity of a single human life (Babyl. Talmud, Shabbat 132 and Tosefta Shabbat XVI, 12).

The scale of legal values, through the medium of the oral law, was gradually adjusting itself to the broader requirements of the people's morals.

#### 4. ISRAEL AND HUMANITY

Within the family of mankind, every member of which was presumed to be born with Adam's stamp of godlikeness upon his face, the Jewish community regarded itself as a family within a family. Through the fatherhood of the first man all human beings were, according to common belief, interrelated, but only the descendants of Abraham were brothers one to another. How far this distinction between the degrees of relationship affected the moral obligations towards individual fellow-men will be considered later (see g. Relations with Non-Jews). The immediate point here is whether the adoption of the genealogical conception of the Bible (Genesis X) had a direct effect on the attitude of the Jewish people as a whole towards alien peoples, its partners in history.

There is no doubt that one of the most difficult tasks facing the spiritual leaders of Israel was to infuse into their people's mind the notion that it had been raised, by God's grace, to the rank of a "chosen people." This apparently privileged position carried with it the arduous obligation to bear the burden of the Law, and all available evidence of history shows that, up to the breakdown of Jewish political independence, the nation as a whole was rather disinclined to play the ordained role. The responsibilities involved in the privilege of

being God's "firstborn son" (Exodus IV, 22; Jeremiah XXXI, 9) did not appeal to the main body of the people. It preferred to maintain its relations to other peoples on an equal footing, to mix with them, to imitate their ways of life, to share their tastes, even to worship their "no-gods" (Deuteronomy XXXII, 21; Jeremiah II, 11; Hosea I, 9). The strong reluctance evinced by the Houses of Israel and Judah against constituting themselves as a spiritual aristocracy among the dwellers of the earth, as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus XIX, 6), led the Prophets to emphasize over and over again the everlasting validity of the Covenant between the Lord and "His people," according to which Israel ought to be, in things spiritual, the legitimate representative of all mankind. Within the framework of God's Covenant with all the sons of Noah, this eternal treaty with Abraham's seed contained, as the Bible has it, the special obligation to collaborate with the Creator in reaching the moral goal of universal history (Genesis IX, 8-17; Isaiah XI, 9). It took nearly ten centuries to instil into the Jewish mind the consciousness of Israel's duty towards the world at large, but in the end it became as integral a part of the people's morality as the idea of human godlikeness itself. The result was the remolding of the Jewish community in conformity with its moral ideals.

#### 5. PECULIAR FEATURES OF JEWISH SOCIETY

Constituted as a family within a family, on the basis of a Covenant within a Covenant, the Jewish community developed features which seem to be unique in the history of social life. United in their common obligation to bring nearer "the end of the days" (Isaiah II, 2-4; Micah IV, 1-5), the age of universal peace and universal wisdom (Jeremiah XXXI, 31-34), each son of the Covenant was called upon to make his personal contribution to an effort pointing toward a distant future. To participate in this assignment with which the House of Israel had been charged was the only thing which really mattered in the



individual's life, giving it meaning and direction. Each generation was but a link between ancestry and posterity, and the individual but a means for maintaining the continuity of the national effort. Hence the inclusion into the living community of those who were no more, as well as of those who were not yet, as if all of them were its permanent members. Thus veneration of the forefathers and anxiety for the weal of the unborn generations were merged into one. The people was addressed as though it were one being, and the individual was regarded, and regarded himself, as the embodiment of the whole people. The promise "that thy days may be long" and the reminder "that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt" (Deuteronomy V, 15-16) deliberately effaced the distinction between the people and its individual members. Accordingly, death meant to the individual being finally incorporated into the national body or, in the Biblical phrase, "to be gathered to his people" (Genesis XXV, 8 and XLIX, 29). In relation to the very distant ancestors at one end of the lineage, and to the no less distant offspring at the other, it was quite natural to recognize all contemporaries within the community as "brothers."

But the great fraternity of Israel was not fatherless. Their ever-present, ever-watchful head was the Creator of the Universe Himself. Without His perpetual presence Israel would cease to be a society of brothers; by His grace, whenever two of the Children of Israel met, the Lord was the third in their company. And even face to face with his own soul, the Jew knew that he was not alone. Rabbi Akiba expressed it thus: "How distinguished is man, since created in the image of God, and still more distinguished in the consciousness of having been created in the image of God . . . and how distinguished are Israel, since called His children, and still more distinguished in the consciousness of having been called His children, as it is said, 'Ye are the children of the Lord your God'" (Sayings of the Fathers III,

14). The Torah passage quoted by Rabbi Akiba proceeds: "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord . . . out of all peoples that are upon the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy XIV, 1-2; cf. also VII, 6-9).

A society which included past and future generations, as well as God Himself, as its integral parts, and which conceived its own perpetuation as a means to the fulfillment of a moral obligation, i.e., the realization of the Prophetic ideal of universal harmony in this world, was bound to evolve its own peculiar structure. As a fraternity it could not but be a democracy. But its aristocratic notion of being the spiritual élite of the human race—humanity itself being the aristocracy of the created world—led to ever more pronounced distinctions of spiritual rank within this primarily democratic society. Like the entire people, so a certain tribe or group within this people could gain distinction by its greater nearness to the source and final end of Creation. Genealogy thus acquired importance second only to Cosmogony, while the idea of spiritual primogeniture did not clash with that of general brotherhood. Having accepted the burden of representing God's will in this world, the Jewish community acquiesced also in its own division into the two classes of spiritual leaders and followers, with the understanding, however, that everyone was eligible in principle to pass from the latter group to the first. Taken as a whole, the community presented the rare phenomenon of a democratically organized aristocracy, its coat of arms emblazoned with the words of Moses: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets" (Numbers XI, 29).

#### 6. PERSONAL RELATIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

In the popular conception, the emotional relationship between God and man was based on bonds of mutual love. So was the relationship between man and man. The commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor (the other) as thyself"

(Leviticus XIX, 18), was proclaimed by Rabbi Akiba to be the "all-embracing principle of the Law" (Sifra on the quoted verse). This applied to human beings in general (Sayings of the Fathers I, 12). However, the members of the Jewish community were expected to be bound together by a more specific kind of benevolence, by the closer ties of brotherly love. The word of the Torah, "That thy brother may live with thee" (Leviticus XXV, 36), became the guiding rule in both legal and extra-legal relations between Jew and Jew.

Within the pattern of this general brotherhood, all types of personal relationships were subordinated to the ideal cause which the community as a whole was destined to serve.

The family was transformed into a unit best fitted to cultivate the national tradition and to maintain the cohesion between past and future. The primary duty of the father toward his children was to "teach diligently" all that he himself had absorbed of the knowledge accumulated by the older generations, and always to be prepared to satisfy the child's curiosity concerning Israel's history (Deuteronomy VI, 7, 20). That this paternal duty was, on the whole, conscientiously discharged is proved by the early history of Jewish educational institutions. Only in a society where the family itself functioned as a preparatory school could the idea of universal obligatory instruction be conceived and implemented. The enhanced authority of the father in his twofold capacity as head of the family and headmaster of the domestic school by no means infringed upon the authority of the mother, the second in command. In our sources, father and mother go together, with the latter sometimes taking precedence (Exodus XX, 12; Leviticus XIX, 3). For a son not to "obey the voice of the mother" was an offense no less grave than disobedience toward the father (Deuteronomy XXI, 18-21). No one, however, thought it possible that a daughter might turn "rebellious" like a

son. (Mishnah Sanhedrin VIII, 1; Josephus was of a different view.)

The relative equality of husband and wife in the domestic sphere was, no doubt, rooted in generally accepted principles of sexual morals. Legitimate sexual intercourse was invested with a halo of holiness (Leviticus XIX, 2; XX, 7-26). Notwithstanding the legal recognition of polygamy, the union between man and wife for procreation was considered a relationship of a unique character, as if "the first man", Adam, were to know Eve in order to continue the divine work of Creation. Accordingly, any deviation from sexual normalcy was regarded as an "abomination" (Leviticus XVIII, 22-30). Though considered less firm than the man, not only in body but also in spirit, the woman was still his blessed helpmate without whom he would be incomplete; and, because of her very feminine weakness, it was thought she needed special protection. Her womanly reputation was untouchable, her honor sacrosanct (Deuteronomy XXII, 13-19). The purity of Jewish family life, which in later centuries was to be so much admired even by opponents of Judaism, was in essence the result of two interrelated factors: the elevation of the mother to equality with the father and the sanctification of the conjugal relationship.

The inclusion of sex behavior in the code of ideal Jewish morality curbed the development of ascetic tendencies which had made their appearance as early as the Biblical age. All precepts of the Law were interpreted with reference to the Torah phrase, "He shall live by them" (Leviticus XVIII, 5), repeated also by Ezekiel (XX, 11) and in Nehemiah IX, 29, in such a sense as to exclude behavior detrimental to life. Self-imposed deprivation, according to Rabbi Joshua, is tantamount to an attempt to destroy the world (Mishnah Sota III, 4 *in fine*). At the end of the Mishnaic period the saying "He shall live, and not die, by them" (i.e., by the commandments) had become almost proverbial, providing each member of the Jewish com-

munity with a moral criterion for his relations with himself.

In sanctifying legal sexual relations and the biological existence of man in general, Jewish morality created a basis for a humane attitude also towards animal life. Protection of a bird's maternal feelings, the extension to cattle of the privilege to rest on Sabbath, and a number of similar legal institutions (Deuteronomy XXII, 6-7; Exodus XXIII, 12; Deuteronomy XXV, 4) were all based on the fact that the righteous in Israel, as the popular saying went, "regardeth the life of his beast" (Proverbs XII, 10; cf. Bab. Talmud, Nedarim 50a, the jest ascribed to Rabbi Akiba's wife). To this aspect of Jewish morality belongs also the methodical cultivation of feelings of abhorrence for whatever is hideous, unclean and repulsive in nature. The commandment, "Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby" (Leviticus XI, 43 and XX, 25), had been taken to heart by the people and prompted a reaction against evil and evildoers as if, like creeping snakes, they were by nature disgusting and repulsive.

Practical and realistic in its appreciation of the hard facts of man's individual life, Jewish morality brought the same attitude to the harsh realities of social co-existence. The most striking of these was the uneven distribution of wealth within the great fraternity of Israel. Though poverty was regarded as a natural phenomenon, like physical deformity ("For the poor shall never cease out of the land"—Deuteronomy XV, 11), the destitute "brother," he who had "waxen poor" (Leviticus XXV, 25, 35, 39), remained a source of constant worry both to the community and to each of its more fortunate members. It seemed a matter of fairness that the misfortune of the indigent brothers be corrected by allowing them to share in the affluence of their wealthier brethren. Consequently, the material assistance extended to them was not "charity" in the modern sense: it was their

due, as testified by the derivation of the Hebrew term for this kind of voluntary aid, *Tsedakah*, from *Tsedek*, Justice. In a sense, all private property was part and parcel of the people's heritage and its possessors were charged with maintaining the poor in the common interest. Under the impact of these ideas, the ancient institution of "Hebrew bondmen" (Exodus XX, 2-11) was bound to disappear. Neither could distinctions of wealth develop into class distinctions of a permanent character. Luxury was deprecated even when displayed by kings, and in the end poverty itself rose to the distinction of being the mark of righteousness.

This was the moral atmosphere in which, towards the conclusion of the epoch under review, the idea of rebuilding Jewish society in accordance with the highest requirements of social justice began to gain ground, and in which sectarian movements, like that of the Hasidim Rishonim or the Essenes, could grow and flourish. One such movement was Christianity.

It may be assumed that by this time an expanding market economy with its unavoidable temptations had done considerable damage to the brotherly relations among Jews, especially in the sphere of trade. The morally alert felt called upon to cast about for emergency measures. Strengthening the law was one of them; forming closer fraternities within the greater fraternity of Israel was another, the latter being probably inspired by the traditional Jewish conception which saw humanity in an essentially concentric pattern.

## 7. THE IDEAL MAN

Jewish morality found its most condensed expression in the image of the ideal man, an image set up to guide the individual through the straits and travails of earthly life. No moral ideal is ever complete without its incarnation in a life story, whether it be a true story or merely legend. When the moral ideal of the Jewish people had finally emerged, it was linked closely

to the personality of Moses, in whose face no trait had been more fascinating than the look of modesty.

In emphasizing the modesty of its greatest hero, Jewish tradition implicitly reaffirmed the meaning of man's godlikeness as a moral principle: the nearer man comes to God, the clearer is his realization of the distance separating him from perfection, the closer is he united with the rest of humanity in the common duty of self-perfection. Thus Moses was extolled as the "Father of the Prophets," men who never spoke in their own name and who, in their turn, were followed by the Soferim (Scribes), the modest interpreters of the law. Down to the fathers of the Mishnah, modesty remained the traditional virtue of the Jewish spiritual élite and, more precisely, the virtue of tradition itself. In the Jewish view, the ideal man must not try to begin a new beginning, but rather carry on the work of his predecessors. "Moses," states the Mishnah, "received the Torah from Sinai and passed it to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, these to the prophets, the prophets to the men of the Great Synagogue . . ." and so from generation to generation (Sayings of the Fathers I, 1-12; II, 8). Therefore the ideal man must be a learned man, versed in the sacred law which he is called upon to implement and to enrich. The greater his scholarly achievements, the more pronounced his modesty. Again in the words of the Mishnah: "If thou hast studied much Torah, do not take pride in it, for to this end thou wast created" (*ibid.* II, 8). These words are attributed to Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai who, after the destruction of the Second Temple, restored Jewish communal independence on the basis of study.

Modesty may be regarded as the key to all the virtues which were supposed to be engraved on the souls of the best among men. With modesty went self-restraint, contentment with one's lot, consideration for the humble, a mild, serene and open mind, and a pure heart full of mercy and forgiveness. A "clean heart" and "right

spirit" were the bounties prayed for by the pious Psalmist (Psalms XXIV, 4; LI, 12). In consonance with the endeavors of more ancient piety, Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai declared that a good life is unthinkable without a "good heart" (Sayings of the Fathers II, 9). And still another trait typical of older piety was integrated in the image of the ideal man: his "right spirit," like that of the "righteous" (*Zaddik*) and the "gracious one" or "saint" (*Hasid*) of the Psalms, was winged with cheerfulness. At peace with himself, with his fellow-men and with God's world, he was able to enjoy life, even when it demanded, as from Rabbi Akiba, the supreme sacrifice in the service of his Maker. All he did was done "for the sake of heaven," unselfishly, without expectation of reward. It was at this time that the House of Prayer, where the people learned the Psalms by heart, and the House of Learning, where the virtues of the ideal scholar were evolved and cultivated, united in one, so as to produce the composite image of the righteous *Talmid Hakam* (Pupil of the Wise), the ideal of manhood for a long chain of later generations.

#### 8. GUILT AND SELF-REDEMPTION

Realistic, in a higher sense, as it was, Jewish morality could not conceive even the ideal man as being entirely free from sin. "Surely there is not a righteous man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not"—this generalization of Ecclesiastes (VII, 20), which we also find in Solomon's prayer (First Kings VIII, 46), may well be a reference to the life of Moses and its tragic end (Deuteronomy XXXII, 51-52). At the same time this conception provided the Jewish conscience with an answer to Job's question: Why is it that the wicked often prosper whilst the righteous often come to grief? Not unaccountable fate, but personal guilt, attributable even to the most perfect among the sons of Adam, was thought to be the real cause of human suffering. This doctrine, proclaimed by the Prophet of the Exile (Ezekiel III, 20-21; XVIII, 1-32), was progressively as-

simulated by the mass of the people and helped to sustain its belief in the existence of a moral world order. The core of this doctrine was the recognition of the individual as the real center in any pattern of social morality. No one could henceforth shift moral responsibility to someone else's shoulders; no one could ascribe to himself a definite moral character, be it good or bad, so long as his individual life was not accomplished to the very end. "The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness" (*ibid.* XXXIII, 12). Instead of being taken as a static fact, moral personality, in this fundamental conception, becomes a dynamic factor which, at any moment, can propel the individual either in the right or the wrong direction.

The prophet's term "one's way" (*darko*) became as classical as his trust in man's faculty to "turn away" from lifelong habits and pursuits. In this fundamental Jewish conception, neither sacrifice nor material reparation could efface moral guilt, unless prompted by a genuine sense of culpability and an innermost desire to "turn away" from evil and "come back" to the path of righteousness. Man's power to accomplish his own moral "return" (*Teshuvah*), to convert himself, as it were, was discovered to be the most adequate expression of his godlikeness as well as of his freedom. For the Jew, there could be no other redeemer from his sense of guilt than his own free will, and no redemption from sin but self-redemption—through prayer and change of heart. These are the moral implications of Rabbi Akiba's laconic dictum: "The power is given" (*Sayings of the Fathers* III, 15).

However, the stress laid upon the moral responsibility of the individual did not restrict its scope to one's own acts or omissions. Responsibility for the moral well-being of one's neighbor (*Leviticus* XIX, 17; *Ezekiel* III, 17-18) involved an extension of the sphere of actual or potential

guilt far beyond the limits of individual life, culminating in the image of God's servant laden with "the iniquity of us all" (*Isaiah* LIII, 6).

#### 9. RELATIONS WITH NON-JEWS

In their personal relations with non-Jews, the members of the Jewish community were expected to comply with two apparently contradictory guiding principles. The first obliged the Jew to respect the human dignity of the non-Jew and to accord him all the privileges due to a son of Adam; the second required him to keep the non-Jew at arm's length, never admitting him to the intimacy of Jewish private life. However, this attitude of aloofness, which became a more and more conspicuous feature of the Jewish mind, indicated not a retraction of the universalistic tendency in Jewish morality but, on the contrary, its very triumph. It resulted from the fact that this universalistic tendency had so impressed itself upon the mind of the individual that it determined the patterns of his personal behavior. At the time of the conclusion of the Mishnah the Jews, with rare exceptions, knew that every one of them had to live up to the Jewish moral ideal which embraced all humanity and that, in consequence, it was the individual's task to keep the House of Israel intact, for humanity's sake. Hence the reluctance to make proselytes and the aversion to intermarriage: "They prohibited the drinking of the wine of non-Jews," states the Talmud, "because of their daughters" (*Abodah Zara*, 36b). Far from regarding non-Jews individually as inferior to themselves, and attracted to them by natural instinct, the Jews threw the full weight of their moral discipline into the fight against this ever-present temptation.

Anxious to preserve the integrity and homogeneity of their closed society, the Jews tended to show all the more consideration to the alien who, for whatever reason, had to live amongst them. Even the kings of ancient Israel were famed as "merciful" (*First Kings* XX, 31). In the

Bible the "stranger" (*Ger*) and the "sojourner" (*Toshav*) come nearest to the "brother" (Leviticus XXV, 35). Special protection had to be extended to them, as to the widow and the orphan (Exodus XXII, 20-23 and Deuteronomy XXVII, 19), "for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exodus XXIII, 9). The same reason is given for the commandment: "Thou shalt love the stranger as thyself" (Leviticus XIX, 34 and Deuteronomy X, 19). The oral law enhanced and further developed these same precepts. It was one of the fathers of the Mishnah, the disciple of Rabbi Akiba, Simeon ben Azzai, who declared that the scope of the verse, "This is the book of the generations of Adam; in the day that God created man, He made

him in the likeness of God" (Genesis V, 1), was even more significant than the commandment to love others as one loves oneself (Sifra on Leviticus XIX). The idea of the unity of the human race, with all that this implied in the relations between man and man, irrespective of origin, was thus established as the essence of the Jewish moral tradition. The spirit of the Law, of the Prophets and of the Mishnah merged together to justify the self-imposed segregation of the Jewish community in its humble service to a universal cause.

The self-preservation of Israel through the subsequent centuries is sufficient proof that the moral ideas of its teachers had become habitual motives in its reaction to the contingencies of historical life.

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# JEWISH WAYS OF LIFE

Joseph Heller

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The traditional Jewish way of life is based on manners and customs, usages and rules of behavior which originated in various countries and epochs and which have been transmitted and preserved from one generation to the next. Although this way of life incorporates a variety of cultural elements and reflects the internal social and economic development of the Jewish people as well as the influences which affected it from without, it is above all an expression of the Jewish religious and moral tradition. At the same time, in the course of the more than three thousand years of its history, the cultural pattern of Jewish life evidenced certain variations based primarily on geographical factors. The most marked differentiations developed between European and Oriental Jewries. Among the Europeans, moreover, we have to distinguish between the Sephardim and Ashkenazim, and among the latter, again, between the Western and Eastern European communities.

Nevertheless, despite these differences, the Jewish way of life constitutes a recognizable and largely uniform pattern, an outgrowth of a common historical tradition.

That tradition was shaped by a rigorous religious and ethical discipline which, until well into the nineteenth century, wielded virtually absolute authority over the entire people. It became deeply rooted in the spirit of the people, and while determining the character of the Jewish way of life, also to some extent adapted itself to the needs of Jewish life. Jewish religious tradition, moreover, often absorbed popular usages and gave them a religious legal sanction. According to the Talmud, a prevailing custom (*minhag*) may even abrogate a Rabbinic law under certain conditions. The value placed on popular customs resulted in so strongly intertwining the Jewish way of life with formal religious tradition that it has become almost impossible to separate them.

The social significance of Jewish customs and traditions is that they keep alive among the masses of the people an awareness of their common origin and their common cultural heritage, thus reinforcing their faith in the continued existence of the Jewish people as a national community with its own historical destiny. The Jewish mores, even when lacking a basis in the religious tradition, were endowed with a certain sanctity as a symbol of Jewishness; conversely, the adoption of alien habits, even those not forbidden by the Torah, was regarded almost as a sin, on the principle that one must not follow the "practices of the Gentiles" (*hukkot ha-goyim*). The so-

cial and economic basis of the Jewish way of life was anchored in the fact that during the Middle Ages and later the Jews formed predominantly an urban middle class of traders and artisans. The relationship of man to nature consequently played little part in their lives. Their way of life was concerned rather with every possible aspect of social relationships. It governed not only the successive stages in the life-history of the individual, but also his everyday contact with and attitude toward his family, friends, community and the Jewish people at large.

Notwithstanding its deeply conservative character, the Jewish way of life has always borrowed elements from the surrounding culture. These, however, became so transformed and so intimately integrated with the system of Jewish laws and precepts that they acquired a new meaning. Once stripped of the slightest taint of the alien faith and of any connection with "the practices of the Gentiles," the innovation became a Jewish custom.

In regard to the influence of alien cultures, we may distinguish four principal periods. The first lasted about a thousand years, from the beginning of Jewish history until the end of the Babylonian Exile. The basic elements of the Jewish religion and of the Jewish way of life were crystallized in this period, in direct contact with the cultures of the surrounding peoples, Babylonians, Egyptians, Canaanites, Phoenicians, Arameans, and others, and at the same time in sharp opposition to them. The second period, also of about a thousand years, extended from the time of Ezra and Nehemiah to the conclusion of the Talmudic period, at the end of the fifth century C.E. The older laws, customs and practices were further developed and systematically expanded, chiefly on the solid foundation of Biblical law, but partly also through the adaptation of legal institutions and customs of other peoples, the Persians, Greeks, Romans, etc., to the Jewish religious conception of life. The result of this spiritual activity was the Talmud, which

became thenceforth the basis of the Jewish way of life. In the third period, from the sixth to the sixteenth century, the Jewish people found itself in a world dominated by Christianity and Islam. The fact that these religions sprang out of Judaism tended to intensify rather than to reduce the friction between the Jewish and the non-Jewish worlds. This circumstance left a distinctive imprint on the medieval Jewish way of life. The fourth period, comprising the last four centuries, is characterized by the penetration of modern ideas into Jewish life, as well as by internal conflicts and schisms within Jewry. Beginning with the middle of the eighteenth century the movement towards "emancipation" and "assimilation" made its appearance. The Jewish way of life began to adapt itself to that of the surrounding world, as a consequence losing more and more of its traditional content.

In the maintenance of the Jewish traditional way of life the concentration of the Jewish population in special areas was a factor of primary importance. Even before the ruling powers confined the Jews to a compulsory ghetto, Jews preferred to live together. The feeling that he was among his own people always gave the Jew a sense of moral and material security. As early as in the period of antiquity the tendency to concentrate in "Jewish districts" in the large Diaspora centers was clearly manifested (e.g., Rome, Alexandria, etc.). In the Middle Ages, ever since the end of the eleventh century, we know of "Jewish" sections in the cities of many European countries, even before segregation was enforced through the combined pressure of the Church and the guilds. Later, beginning with the thirteenth century, the Jewish section was often barred off from the rest of the city area by thick walls. These "ghetto" barriers and the crowded condition of the population behind them undoubtedly limited the freedom of the inhabitants and left its impress on the way of life of the Jewish communities of Western Europe.





TYPES OF FRENCH JEWS, 14TH CENTURY

Just as the ghetto imposed its stamp on the character and attitude toward life of the Jewish communities in Western Europe, Jewish life in the small towns of Russia and Poland created a distinct Jewish type in Eastern Europe. There the small "Jewish town" lived its own life, socially humble, idyllically primitive, poor and insecure. Yet at the same time it was permeated by profound idealism and an indomitable religious optimism. The small town played a positive part in Jewish life, similar to that of the village in the Christian world. It was a reservoir of fresh moral power, a source of national spiritual energy. The social structure of the typical small town was simple: a very thin stratum of the well-to-do in the midst of petty merchants and shopkeepers, artisans and unskilled laborers, whose standard of living was often scarcely higher than that of the pauper. Communal organization and social relations were on a rather primitively paternalistic level, and exploitation was not unknown. Despite these imperfections, there was always present, thanks to the force of religious tradition, the characteristic attitude of equity, humane behavior and compassion, as well as the readiness to perform one's charitable duty, even among the majority of the wealthier class.

On the basis of these religious and moral sentiments many social customs, institu-

tions and societies developed and flourished. Every town had its *hevrah kadisha* ("holy society"), whose function it was to care for those gravely ill and to perform the religious rites for the dying and the dead. The stranger found shelter in the communal hostel. There was a society for providing free schooling in the Talmud Torah; another (*bikkur holim*) came to the aid of the sick; still others provided dowries for poor girls (*haknasat kallah*); extended hospitality to penniless wayfarers (*haknasat orehim*); distributed clothing among the poor (*malbish arumim*); extended loans without interest to shopkeepers and artisans (*gemilut hesed*), etc. In preparation for the Passover a voluntary tax made possible the distribution of matzot to the needy. All of these were voluntary associations, organized primarily for the purpose of satisfying the moral and religious impulses of the individual, and of giving everyone an opportunity to fulfill the traditional commandments in regard to kindness and charity.

## II. TRADITIONAL DRESS

Certain standards of dress and care of the person were indispensable features of Jewish life. The beard and earlocks were the marks of a man's dignity. The pious man usually wore a full beard and long curled earlocks. The custom in Eastern



NON-JEWISH



JEWISH

FEMININE ATTIRE, COLOGNE, 16TH CENTURY



GREEK



JEWISH

FEMININE ATTIRE, NEAR-EAST, 16TH CENTURY

Europe, particularly among the Hasidim, to let the beard grow unchecked as distinct from the practice in Western Europe even in the Middle Ages, was partly inspired by the Kabbala, according to which the human face, the likeness of God, is sacred. The head must not be left uncovered. As early as the Talmudic period it was regarded as unseemly to go about bareheaded, and since the Middle Ages it has been forbidden to pray or to pronounce a benediction with uncovered head.

A custom which probably goes back to Biblical times requires married women also to keep their heads covered. The conventions of modesty and pious behavior required the wife to keep her tresses out of sight. The custom of cropping the locks of the bride and covering the head with a coif, a *kupke* or wig, is a medieval innovation. The *kupke* (cap) was made of silk and was held by an elastic forehead band, the *shterntichl*, usually embroidered with pearls and, among rich folk, studded with diamonds. To this day pious Jewish women wear a *sheitel* or wig.

The traditional garb was governed partly by ancient precepts in the Torah, partly by medieval regulations, and finally by the prevailing adherence to old customs. The Torah (Numbers XV, 38-39) prescribes the wearing of *tsitsit* on the four corners of the outer garment. These "fringes," serve as constant reminders of the Torah precepts. Later the *tsitsit* were attached to a four-cornered piece of cloth or linen worn under the outer clothing, the garment thus formed was termed *arba kanfot* (four corners) or the small *tallit*.

At the morning prayer a married man wears a *tallit* (prayer shawl), a rectangular garment with *tsitsit*. In some communities the *tallit* is worn by all men, beginning with the age of *Bar-Mitzvah*. Since there is a Biblical prohibition against the use of any combination of wool with linen, the Jews did not adopt the medieval fashion of wearing linen garments with woolen sleeves. In contrast to the colorful striped costume (the *mi-parti* fashion) of that

period, the Jews for the most part wore long dark-colored garments, mostly black. Black was the color of mourning, a symbol of the people in exile. On solemn occasions, at the Passover *Seder* and especially during the services of the New Year and the Day of Atonement, some wore a *kitl*, a white gown as a symbol of serenity and peace, purity and holiness.

In the early Middle Ages the dress of Christians and Jews was, generally speaking, more or less similar. Beginning in the thirteenth century, however, the Church compelled the Jews in many countries to put on distinguishing colored marks or wear distinctive hats. Thereafter the Jewish garb tended in increasing measure to differ from that of the non-Jews. It is worthy of note that in matters of dress the Jews held on to the adopted forms with more conservatism than did their non-Jewish neighbors. The distinctive Jewish dress of Eastern Europe had its origin chiefly in the fact that the Jews preserved certain fashions long after they became obsolete among the non-Jews. The traditional attire of the Polish Jews, for example, strongly resembles what was once the "high fashion" of the Polish nobility. But the Jews always adapted the alien fashions to their own taste and to their religious ideas. Typical of the Jewish dress is the severe vertical line, emphasized and broken by a girdle, a characteristic style of the Middle Ages. For the festivals the Jews favored silk, satin, plush and velvet fabrics.

On weekdays Polish Jews usually wore a stiff round hat or a cap with a peak. The more prosperous men and the learned men of the community wore a fur hat, and on Sabbaths and festivals, a *shtraiml*, a velvet hat with fur trimming, preferably sable. The everyday outer garment of the Polish Jew was a long coat, the *kapote*. On the Sabbath and the festivals he wore a silk robe or a Sabbath *kapote*. The typical Hasidic costume included, in addition to the girdle, slippers and black or white stockings. Female attire was more varied and gayer. The women of well-to-do fami-



GREEK MERCHANT



JEWISH MERCHANT

MASCULINE ATTIRE, CONSTANTINOPLE, 16TH CENTURY



TYPES OF COSTUMES, WESTERN GERMANY, 16TH CENTURY



*Engraving, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris*  
LITHUANIAN JEWESS, 18TH CENTURY



*French Engraving*  
TURKISH JEWESS, 17TH CENTURY



CONSTANTINOPLE JEWESS, 17TH CENTURY



*Drawing by E. Delacroix*  
MOROCCAN JEWESS, EARLY 19TH CENTURY

lies decked themselves out in elegant dresses. On various occasions the rabbis and communal leaders found it necessary to curb the display of wealth and elegance by enacting "sumptuary laws" so as not to provoke the envy of the non-Jewish population. One example of such regulations is found in the statutes adopted in 1628 by the communal heads of Polish Jewry, the Council of the Four Lands. "Sumptuary laws," however, were a familiar feature of Christian as well as of Jewish life.

### III. FAMILY AND HOME

#### 1. THE JEWISH FAMILY

The difference in status of wife and husband is clearly defined in Jewish tradition. The patriarchal, middle-class character of Jewish family life and the functions assigned to husband and wife gave the latter an inferior status. Yet it was this same clear-cut division of duties that made the Jewish family a remarkably stable unit, almost an organic entity.

Early marriage was the rule, and in most instances couples did not meet until their betrothal. The parents arranged to "give away" a son or daughter between the ages of 13 and 17, and usually had the aid of a *shadken* (marriage broker). Among the plain folk, however, opportunities for young people to become acquainted were common, and love-matches occurred often. Although it cannot be asserted that every couple achieved happiness, on the whole the mutual sense of duty, the common ideal of life, and the sharing of joys and sorrows nearly always developed within a short time mutual esteem and affection and ensured a harmonious household.

According to Jewish law, the husband is in many important respects the superior partner. These legal norms, however, were balanced by social and psychological, as well as religious and ethical forces, which tended to safeguard the place of the mother and wife. Her equal right to be honored by the children has an ancient basis in the Ten Commandments. In critical moments

of Jewish history, the woman could play an important part, as for example, the Prophetess Deborah, called "Mother in Israel." The Talmud enjoins the husband to love his wife as himself, to consult her always, and to follow her advice. Indeed, in the household the wife held a more important place than the husband, even if he were a scholar. She was the central figure of family life; it was her responsibility to ensure the observance of the dietary laws (*kashrut*) and to create the home atmosphere appropriate to the Sabbath and festival celebrations. There are many religious customs which could not have survived but for the Jewish mother.

The principal religious task assigned to the wife is to maintain the Jewish character of the home, and to rear the children in the spirit of tradition. It was customary for her to help the husband in earning a livelihood for the family, and in many instances to be both breadwinner and housewife. Many women worked unstintingly so as to leave their husbands free to study Torah and to perform "good deeds" which would redound to the credit of both. The scholarly husband often spent his days in the "house of study" (*bet ha-midrash*); or he might leave home for a period to pursue his studies in a distant center of Jewish learning, where he would live as a *porush*, one "separated" from his family for the sake of study, while the wife would take over the task of earning the family livelihood. Such a woman was regarded as a "woman of valor" (*eshet hayil*). The tradition which governed the duties of each spouse and the spiritual relationship between them, also extended to the more intimate details of their married life. From the husband was demanded reserve and self-discipline; from the wife, modesty and purity. The *mikvah* (ritual bath), which bestowed ritual purity as well as physical cleanliness on man and wife, was an indispensable communal institution.

Childlessness was regarded as divine punishment. The desire for a son was particularly strong, for only the son could continue



From L. Hollaenderski, "*Les Israélites de Pologne*"

TYPES OF POLISH JEWS, 18TH CENTURY

the Jewish tradition to its full extent and could perpetuate the paternal line. The recitation of the *Kaddish* (memorial prayer) and the observance of the anniversary of the parents' death (*Yortsait*) were means whereby the son could enhance the "merit" of his father and mother even after their death. The patriarchal family ties, as well as the moral level of family life, contributed a good deal to the Jewish people's power of resistance in its struggle for survival.

## 2. FOOD

The food habits of the Jewish masses are on the whole determined by the same conditions which govern the food habits of their non-Jewish neighbors. There is, nevertheless, a "Jewish" style of cuisine which has its own distinctive character.

The peculiarity of the Jewish cuisine is due chiefly to two factors, both of a religious nature, namely: the dietary laws, and the laws concerning the Sabbath and festivals. According to the laws of the Bible and the Talmudic rules, it is permitted to eat only the flesh of certain domestic animals and certain types of fish (animals which chew their cud and have cloven hoofs; certain kinds of fowl; fish possessing

scales and fins). With few exceptions, all other animals are forbidden. Only the flesh of animals slaughtered according to certain rules by a qualified *shohet* (ritual slaughterer) may be eaten. The principal requirement is that the animal be slaughtered with a smooth, sharp knife (*halaf*) with a rapid stroke. It is, moreover, forbidden to eat of the blood; every trace of blood must be removed from the meat, which is soaked, salted and rinsed, until all blood is drained off. It is also forbidden to eat certain parts of the fat and of the sinews of the animal.

Jewish food practices are further complicated by the regulations as to the separation of dairy products and meat, involving the use of separate sets of dishes and utensils. It is strictly forbidden to eat meat in any form together with dairy products. After eating meat, six hours must elapse before one may eat dairy food.

These rules excluded from the Jewish diet a number of foods which are staple features of the non-Jewish table, particularly pork and other hog products, horse meat and mare's milk (among the Moslems of Eastern Europe and Central Asia), oysters, crabs, etc.

Jewish culinary art and the flavor of Jewish cooking is essentially associated with



From L. Hollaenderski, "*Les Israélites de Pologne*"

TYPES OF LITHUANIAN JEWS, 18TH CENTURY



JEWISH GROUP IN LUKOW, POLAND

Photo M. Kipnis

the observance of the Sabbath and the festivals. Inasmuch as kindling a fire and labor in general would violate the Sabbath rest, the Jewish housewife can serve a warm meal only by keeping the previously prepared food in a hot oven from Friday evening until Saturday noon. Thus the cooking process is extended to 18 or 20 hours and the food, especially meat, fats, etc., acquires a distinctive flavor. The aromatic elements produced by the heat and given off by fried meat, fat and other foods, lend the dishes a sharply seasoned taste: the *cholnt*-taste and flavor. Apart from the *cholnt* itself, the other Sabbath dishes—the meat, *kugl* (a pudding made of flour and fat), *kishke* and *hetzl* (section of intestine, and throat of a fowl, respectively, stuffed with flour and chicken fat)—likewise receive the sharp *cholnt* flavor.

This special flavor of the Sabbath meal

influenced the style of Jewish cooking in general. Even on weekdays the meat may be roasted, baked, fried or stewed for hours, with generous additions of fat and spices, so as to give them a flavor similar to the Sabbath dishes. This style of cooking was further influenced by the fact that the ancestors of modern European Jewry, including in part the Jews of Eastern Europe, had an intermediate stage of residence in Italy, Spain and France—countries in which the cuisine is piquant and spicy.

A dish deriving from Germany is *krep-lech*, triangular pockets of dough stuffed with minced meat, cheese, etc., somewhat similar to ravioli. German elements in the Jewish cuisine are also represented by *lekech*, a form of honeycake; *kneidlech*, matzoh-meal dumplings, with the addition of melted goose or chicken fat; and *kugl*. The Slavic influence added *lokshn*, a va-



riety of noodles; *borsht*, beet soup; *blintzes*, rolled pancakes filled with cheese or jam; *latkes*, pancakes, etc.

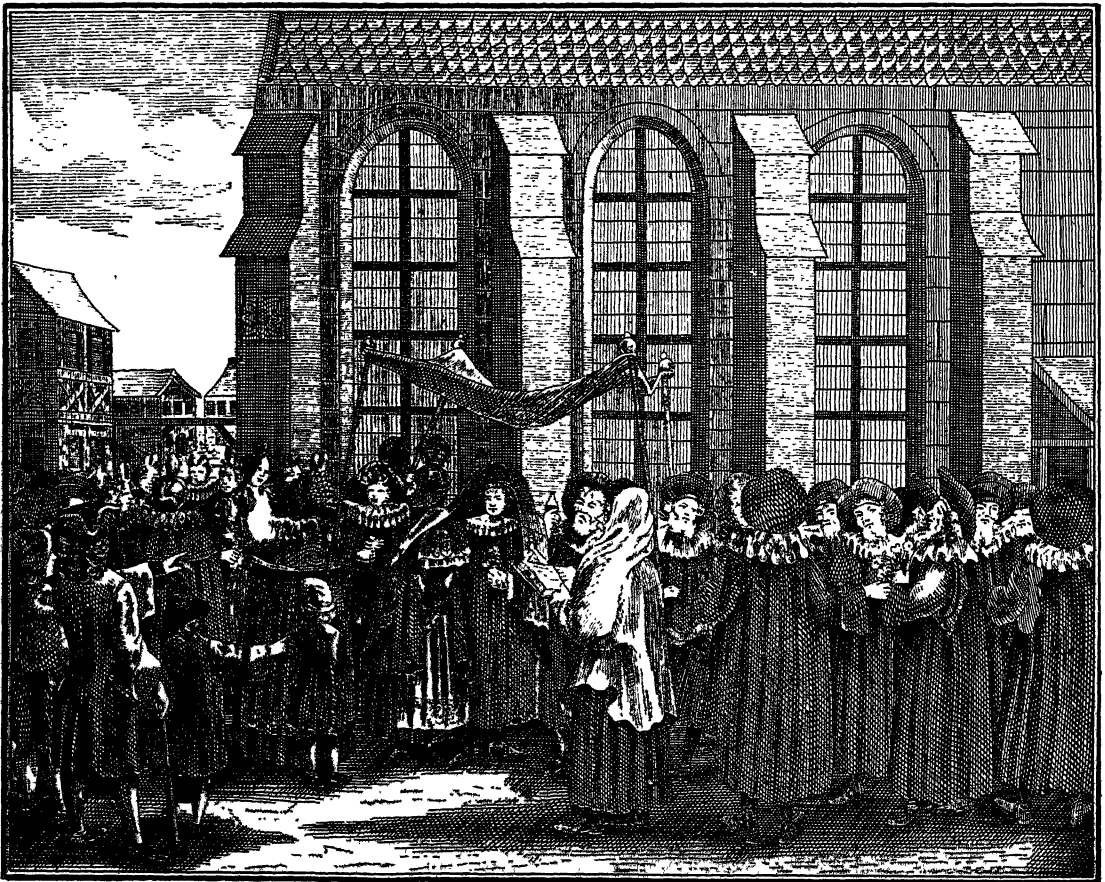
The maintenance of a kosher kitchen and of a festive Sabbath table, and the preparation of special dishes for the Pass-over *Seder*, and of the traditional dishes for other Jewish festivals, placed a heavy economic burden on the modest Jewish home. But this material sacrifice provided one of the strongest external bonds which cemented the unity of the Jewish people, and greatly augmented the importance of the housewife in the Jewish home.

### 3. JOYS AND SORROWS

The central position occupied by the family in the Jewish way of life is illustrated by the fact that the Hebrew word *simhah*, joy, has come to denote any happy

event in the family circle, such as a wedding, circumcision, or Bar-Mitzvah celebration.

*Weddings:* The occasion of marriage involves a complex of solemn ceremonies, symbolic acts, customs and popular usages, which vary according to the region in which Jews live. In Eastern Europe and among the Sephardim, the wedding festivities often continue for a whole week and more. On the Sabbath preceding the wedding, the husband-to-be is ceremoniously conducted to the synagogue, escorted to a seat of honor, and "called up" for the Reading of the Torah, in this way receiving recognition as a householder and member of the community. In the evening, the girls and women come to dance at the home of the bride. The festivities are ushered in by inviting the needy to the "Poor Meal" a day



From Kirchner "Juedisches Ceremoniel", 1726

EARLY 18TH CENTURY WEDDING CEREMONY IN NUREMBERG, GERMANY

or two before the wedding. The guests sit at the table, while the family of the bride and groom serve them. After the feast the guests dance in honor of the betrothed pair, and gifts of money and food are distributed to them.

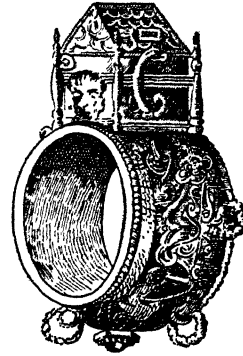
On the day before the wedding, the bridegroom's family invites his friends to a "Bridegroom's Meal." On the day of the wedding, the bridegroom and the bride fast. According to tradition, on this day their sins are forgiven, as on the Day of Atonement. At the afternoon prayer service, the couple recite the Yom Kippur prayer, *Al Het*, the confession of sins.

The wedding proper proceeds through several ceremonial stages: the *bazetsn* (enthronement) of the bride; the *badekn* (veiling); the *unterfirm* (escorting the bride and groom to the *huppah*—canopy); the ritual (*kiddushin*); and the wedding-banquet. After the "enthronement," the *badhen* (wedding jester), the master of ceremonies, leads the musicians up to the bridegroom and hands him the bride's gifts, a white *kittl*, a girdle, a *yarmulke* (skullcap) and *tallit*.

Accompanied by the *badhen*, the bridegroom is then conducted by the family and guests to the home of the bride's parents to perform the ceremony of *badekn*. As he places the veil over the head of the bride, the others recite the words addressed by Isaac to Rebecca: "Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions" (Genesis XXIV, 60).

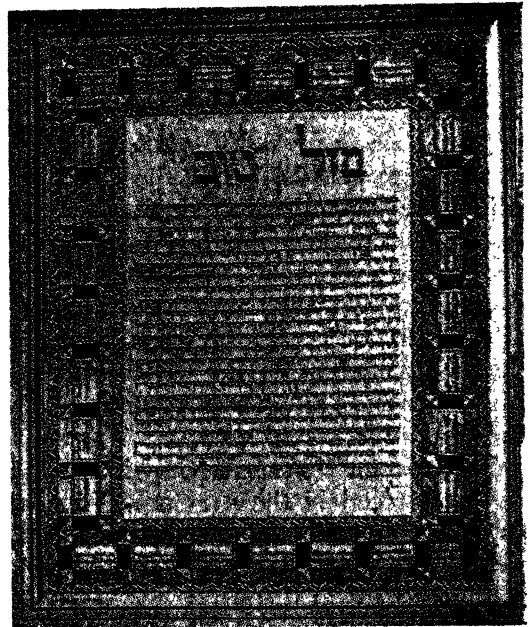
The "escorts," usually relatives of the couple, array the bridegroom in the *kittl*; over it he puts on a dark mantle and before the "*huppah* march" the parents of the bridegroom and the bride bless the pair and extend wishes for their wedded happiness. Then, holding lighted candles, the escorts conduct first the bridegroom and then the bride to the canopy, which was often set up in the open court of the synagogue. When the bride arrives she is led seven times around the waiting bridegroom. The rabbi conducting the ceremony recites the *kiddush* benediction over a goblet of wine

from which the bridegroom and the bride each sip. Taking the marriage ring, the bridegroom places it on the bride's finger, at the same time pronouncing the formula:



BETROTHAL RING WITH PERFUME BOX

"With this ring thou art consecrated to me according to the law of Moses and Israel." Then the *ketubah*, the marriage contract, is read aloud and handed to the bride. The rabbi then lifts the goblet of wine and recites the "Seven Benedictions."



MARRIAGE CONTRACT, ITALY, 17TH CENTURY

During the wedding banquet, the *badhen* would amuse the guests and the musicians would play. If the bridegroom was a

learned man, he would deliver a discourse based on a Talmudic text. The presents given by the guests to the young couple were, accordingly, called *droshe geshank* (discourse gifts). At the end of the banquet, after the recitation of the Grace, the "Seven Benedictions" are repeated. The guests then join in the *mitzvah*-dance, and the ceremony ends with a "good-night" song. The "Seven Benedictions" are repeated each day during the seven days following the marriage ceremony, this period being known as "the seven days of the feast."

*Childbirth and Circumcision:* The folk imagination wove a rich fabric of custom around the phenomenon of childbirth. In order to protect the mother and the infant from shades and evil spirits, a Bible or prayerbook was placed beside her. It was also customary to put on the walls of the bedroom paper amulets bearing verses from the Psalms and Kabbalistic formulas. On the first Friday evening after the birth of a male child, relatives and friends gather at the parents' home to celebrate the event, an observance called *Ben Zokor*. The day following, after the Sabbath morning service, family and friends visit the home to "greet the newborn boy" (*Sholem Zokor*). According to popular belief, the night preceding the circumcision, the *wachnacht*, was the period when the danger was greatest that the evil spirits, jealous of human rejoicing, might "take away" the newborn child. In many localities it was the custom to sit up all night in the bedchamber of the mother and recite verses from the Scriptures and other sacred texts.

The circumcision ceremony is customarily performed in the presence of a *minyan*, a quorum of ten adult males. In small towns in Eastern Europe the ritual would usually be held in the synagogue. Candles would be lit, and two chairs placed near the window; one for the *sandek*, who holds the infant on his knees during the operation, and the other for the Prophet Elijah who, according to tradition, is always present when the Jewish child enters the Cove-

nant of Abraham. Many synagogues were provided with a special two-seated chair for this purpose, the so-called "chair of Elijah." The role of *sandek* is an honor usually conferred upon a rabbi or some other venerable personage. Among the other honors bestowed are those of godfather and godmother, *kvater* and *kvaterin*, given to two unmarried young people or to a young couple. The *kvaterin* carries the infant into the room where the circumcision is to be performed, and hands him to the *kvater*. The guests rise and greet the child: "Blessed be he who comes." Then the *kvater* hands the infant over to the *mohel*. The *mohel* rests the infant for a moment on the chair of Elijah, reciting an appropriate ritual verse, then, handing the child to the *sandek*, proceeds with the circumcision. The father of the child recites the benediction: "Blessed art Thou . . . who hast sanctified us by Thy commandments, and hast enjoined us to make him enter into the Covenant of Abraham our father." The congregation responds with: "Just as he hath entered the Covenant, so may he enter into the study of the Torah, the *huppah*, and the performance of good deeds." The *mohel* recites a special benediction over a goblet of wine, and bestows a name upon the child, usually that of a deceased relative of the father or mother. After the circumcision, a *mitzvah*-banquet is held.

The firstborn son must be "redeemed" on the thirtieth day in a ceremony called *pidyon ha-ben*, the redemption of the firstborn, a ritual which takes the form of a dialogue between the father and the *Cohen* who grants the redemption.

*Bar-Mitzvah:* The observance of the Bar-Mitzvah ceremony dates from the Middle Ages. Upon reaching the age of thirteen, the boy attains religious majority. Thereafter the parents cease to bear responsibility for his observance of the religious precepts (*mitzvot*), and the youth takes his place as an adult member of the religious community and may be included in a *minyan*. A few months before his thirteenth birthday, the boy is taught how to put on the



Painting by Moritz Oppenheim

BAR-MITZVAH CELEBRATION, GERMANY, 19TH CENTURY

*tefillin* (phylacteries), and prepares for his appearance as a responsible adult in the synagogue, where for the first time he is called up for the Reading of the Torah, and himself reads the weekly portion of the Prophets, the *Haftarah*. The Bar-Mitzvah celebration is customarily closed by a festive gathering at the boy's home, where the young man usually delivers a discourse (*droshe*).

**Sickness and Death:** The sanctity of human life is one of the basic principles of the Jewish faith. It is a religious duty for the community, as well as for each individual, to strive to preserve physical health and to care for the sick. Almost every community had its *bikkur holim*, the society for visiting the sick. Its members had the task of aiding the stricken and providing needed help. "One who visits the sick," says the Talmud, "takes away a sixtieth part of his sufferings." Where the patient is critically ill it is customary to offer special prayers and recite the Psalms. Alms are also

distributed to the poor, and a new, symbolic name is given to the sick person, as for example Hayim or Hayah, signifying life.

Death, like birth, is regarded as an event of religious and mystical significance. The person gravely ill recites the *viddui*, the liturgical confession. In his last moments the dying man must never be left alone. After death has occurred, all those present recite: "Blessed be the righteous Judge," and the body of the deceased is lifted from the bed and placed on the floor. All pictures and mirrors in the house must be covered. A "soul-candle" is lit in the room of the deceased, and the Psalms are recited in a loud, mournful chant. Then follows the *taharah* (purification of the body). The burial garb (*takrikim*) is of white linen. The corpse is wrapped in a *tallit*, from which one of the fringes is torn off.

One who has lost a member of his immediate family performs the ritual of *keriah*, a symbolic rending of the garment

as a token of mourning. It is considered a sacred duty to accompany the deceased to the place of interment. Where there is no burial society in the community, it is the duty of all to leave their occupations and pay the last tribute to the departed. Even the study of Torah must be interrupted for this purpose. During the funeral procession members of the burial society pass alms boxes among the mourners, repeating the verse: "Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps." Arriving at the grave, the mourners recite the *tsidduk ha-din* (acquiescence in the divine decree as a righteous decision). After the grave is closed the nearest male relatives recite the *Kaddish*. Condolences are offered to the mourners with the words: "May God comfort you among all who mourn for Zion and Jerusalem."

Following the funeral, the relatives or intimate friends of the deceased serve the mourners a meal "to comfort them" (*seudat habraah*). This consists chiefly of an egg or a dish of lentils, symbolizing the wheel of fortune, and a "consolation-cup" of wine. During the seven-day period of mourning (*shivah*), the mourners must stay at home and are required to observe certain restrictions. They may not do any work, and must sit without shoes on the floor or on a low bench. It is a religious duty for neighbors to visit the mourners (*nihum avelim*). Mourners must not have their hair cut until the thirtieth day, nor are they permitted to put on any new garments. The mourning period in observance of the death of a parent is one year, and during the first eleven months the sons recite *Kaddish* at each of the three daily services. It is also customary, at the close of the service, to study some sacred text "for the soul of the deceased." The anniversary of the death of a parent or child is observed as a day of commemoration (*Yortsait*). A memorial candle is lighted and the *Kaddish* is recited by the nearest relatives. When the exact day of death is not known the immediate family may agree on a day to be observed as *Yortsait*.

#### IV. EVERYDAY LIFE

The entire pattern of the traditional Jewish mode of life—from early morning till night, and from the beginning of the year to its end—is built on carefully elaborated rules of behavior, intended to lift man above his material surroundings and to place him, as it were, in a world apart, in a pure, religious-ethical realm. Within this framework every natural function affords an opportunity to perform a meritorious deed (*mitzvah*). Immediately on arising the hands are washed and a prayer of thanksgiving is recited. It is considered meritorious to rise very early and to "strengthen one's self as a lion" in order to serve the Creator. The day is divided according to the three periods of prayer: *Shaharit* (morning prayer), *Minhah* (after noon prayer), and *Maariv* (evening prayer). On the Sabbath and festivals there is an additional prayer, *Musaf*. Although it is permitted to pray alone, it is a greater virtue to pray with one's fellows in the House of Prayer. The pious assemble in the synagogue three times a day; thus the rite of prayer becomes the most significant element in Jewish religious and social life.

Prayer is designated in the Talmud as a divine service of the heart which is "dearer to God than all good works and all sacrifices." Prayer assumed an increasingly prominent role after the destruction of the First Temple, when the synagogue emerged as the center of Jewish life. There developed a new and more spiritualized form of religious ritual which had an overwhelming and far-reaching historical significance, and also strongly influenced the religious life of the Christian and Islamic worlds. The synagogue, which began more and more to take the place of the Temple, at the same time sublimated and democratized Jewish religious life. This influence did not diminish even after the Temple's restoration. It was not every worshiper who was able to bring sacrificial offerings to the Temple; now the humble and poor man, like his prosperous fellow-Jew, was able to

pray to God with all his heart and bare his soul to his Creator.

Prayer gave to the common man the possibility of coming to God, his heavenly Father, without the intervention of a priest, to plead for the granting of his own and his people's needs. The pious man prayed to God not only for the satisfaction of his material needs, but also for divine help in his spiritual needs. "O our Father, the merciful Father who showest mercy, have mercy upon us, and put it in our hearts to discern and to understand, to hear, to learn, to teach, to keep, to do, to fulfill all that is learned by the study of the Law, in love" (*Ahabah Rabbah* in the Morning Service). It was primarily the longing for God, the desire to commune with Him, that brought the pious to the house of God.

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? (Psalms XLII, 1-2).

The Biblical and Talmudic idea of the sanctification of daily life made even of the daily mealtimes an element in the religious way of life. The table is the altar, and the meal is a sacrifice to God. Sitting at the table takes on the quality of sitting before God. Therefore it is necessary to wash one's hands before eating, to recite the benediction, and to conclude the meal with the saying of Grace.

There is almost no detail of daily living which has not the character of a *mitzvah* and that does not have its appropriate benediction. The day closes as it opens—with a prayer of thankfulness to God. Particularly pious Jews rise at midnight to mourn over the destruction of the Temple. This custom, called *tikkun hatsot*—"the midnight rite," was initiated in the sixteenth century by the Kabbalists of Safed.

The national-religious character of the Jewish way of life manifests itself in concrete forms, some of which have been described above. In addition to those, we may note the *tefillin*, which are worn at the morning prayer, and which consist of

two black cube-shaped leather boxes, with straps attached, and containing passages from the Torah relating to the Exodus and the verses of the *Shema*, written on parchment. There is also the *mezuzah*, a small cylinder enclosing a scroll inscribed with verses from the Torah, and attached to the right doorpost of the house. There are in addition the Sabbath candlesticks, and the Hanukkah *Menorah*, the last-named having served as a Jewish national symbol as far back as the time of the Second Temple.

## V. THE JEWISH YEAR

The Jewish calendar is a cycle of seasons of rejoicing and mourning, of work and rest, enjoyment and penitence. Always, however, a note of sadness, the memory of the "destruction of the Temple," is mingled with festive celebrations, and even the days of rest are, in essence, only a means of spiritual renewal. The year is divided into 12 lunar months (13 in intercalary years). The last day of each month, observed by many as a fast day, is known as *Yom Kippur Katan*, "little Yom Kippur," a day of reckoning for the month that has passed, just as the Day of Atonement is the day of reckoning for the year that has gone. The following day, the beginning of the new month, Rosh Hodesh, is observed as a partial holiday.

### 1. SABBATH

The inception and development of the Jewish idea of the Sabbath and the Sabbath institution is a unique phenomenon in the history of civilization. The Sabbath is not only the first but, historically considered, the most significant attempt ever made to establish a rhythm in the yearly round of life and labor, and to free man at regular intervals from the oppressive yoke of work and worldly concerns. The social aspect of the Sabbath as the day of rest is given particular emphasis in the Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue:

Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labour and



TORAH CROWN, ITALY, 18TH CENTURY

do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou" (Deuteronomy V, 12-14).

On the Sabbath it is therefore strictly forbidden to perform any weekday labors, or to occupy oneself with affairs that have to do with the weekday world.

These prohibitions cover a wide range of everyday activities. In addition to labor in the usual sense, it is forbidden to light a fire, to write, to make purchases, or even to touch a work-tool. It would be a mistake, however, to regard these restrictions and prohibitions as the distinctive features of the Sabbath day. The day is most of all a "day of delight" and contented repose. The Sabbath is considered as a gift of God

to His people. At the same time it is the day which the people of Israel dedicates to God. It is the mark of the Covenant between God and the people of Israel.

Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever (Exodus XXXI, 16-17).

The desecration of the Sabbath marked the transgressor as a heretic, as a breaker of the Covenant between God and Israel.

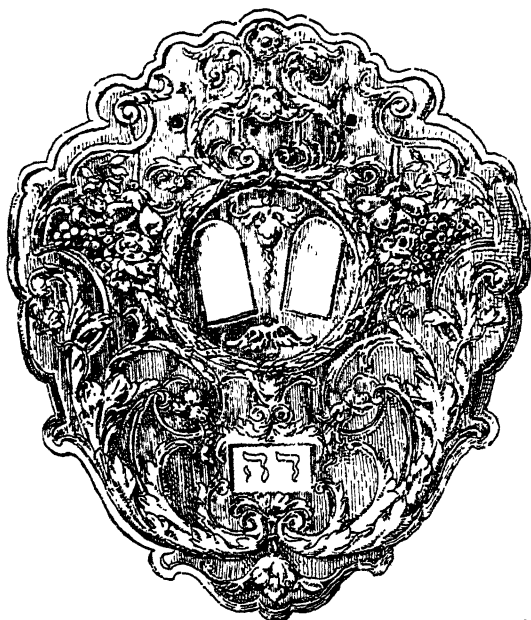
To shed worldly worries for a twenty-four hour period each week became a sacred commandment for both spiritual and physical renewal. On the Sabbath the Jew faces the world with an entirely different outlook and, according to tradition, even takes on a *neshamah yeterah*, a "superior soul," as God's gift for the holy day. The day has acquired, moreover, an ethical significance as the symbol of the ideal of peace among men, social harmony and equality. The fact that all labor had to cease on the Sabbath and that nobody was allowed to benefit from another's toil on that day, has had a far-reaching influence on social relationships within the Jewish world. The Sabbath was also of great importance in the education of the people; while, according to the Talmud, half of the day may be used for one's own pleasure, the other half must be devoted to God, for prayer and study. In the home the relations between husband and wife and between parents and children were endowed by the Sabbath with a sense of holiness. The Sabbath thus played an extraordinary role in Jewish national life and in the struggle of the Jewish people for its national survival. "More than that Israel has kept the Sabbath," wrote Ahad Haam, "it is the Sabbath that has kept Israel."

In the small Jewish town in Eastern Europe, the preparations for the Sabbath would begin as early as Thursday evening. On Friday morning the housewife starts to prepare the food for the holiday table. A Sabbath-eve atmosphere prevails outside



the home as well as within it. The children return from school early. Adults hasten to the communal bath before they don their Sabbath attire. The housewife spreads a fresh tablecloth, on which she sets two loaves of white bread (*hallah*), and covers them with an embroidered napkin. On the table are placed a flask of wine, a goblet and the Sabbath candlesticks. Shortly before sunset the housewife lights the candles as a symbol of the sanctity of the day. The ceremony of the lighting of the candles ushers in the Sabbath. The housewife softly recites the benediction, and then, covering her eyes with her hands, recites a *tehinna* in Yiddish, invoking God's blessings on her husband and children: "As these candles shine, so may shine the eyes of my children with the brightness of Thy sacred Torah. . ."

Before sundown the men and boys go to the synagogue for the service of *Kabbalat Shabbat* (the welcoming of the Sabbath). In honor of the Sabbath "Queen," hymns and songs of praise are sung. At the end of the service the worshiper takes leave of the others with a festive *Gut Shabbes* greeting. As he crosses the threshold of his home, he sings the hymn *Shalom Alekum*, "Peace be unto you," in honor of the Sabbath angels of peace. The husband and father then recites a song of praise addressed to the wife and mother: "A woman of valor who can find? For her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, and he hath no lack of gain. She doeth him good and not evil all the days of her life." (Prov. XXXI, 10-12). The Sabbath meal begins with the *kiddush* ceremony. The head of the family lifts the cup of wine and recites the "sanctification" of the Sabbath. He then pronounces the benediction over the *hallah*, and distributes slices of the loaf to those around the table. It was customary, and considered a great *mitzvah*, to invite a traveler, a *yeshivah* student, or a needy neighbor to the Sabbath table. At the end of the meal Sabbath hymns, *zemirot*, would be sung; and the talk of the menfolk would



Musée Cluny, Paris

SILVER TORAH SHIELD

often turn to the weekly portion of the Torah.

The women as well as the men attend the synagogue on the morning of the Sabbath. In the Orthodox synagogue the women's section is segregated by a partition. The Sabbath service is distinguished by the reading of the weekly portion of the Torah; during the course of the year the entire Pentateuch is thus recited for the synagogue congregation.

After the service the family gathers for the midday meal, again beginning with the *kiddush* and concluding with *zemirot*. The afternoon is spent in resting and reading from some devotional book. The women usually read religious and moralist books in Yiddish. Some return to the synagogue to hear the rabbi or *maggid* (preacher) discourse.

The afternoon service is followed by the third Sabbath meal. Among the Hasidim this became a special ritual which takes the form of a communal meal at the *shetibl* or the home of the rebbe, accompanied by the singing of Hasidic melodies and mystical *zemirot*. The rebbe himself distributes the food after pronouncing the benediction,

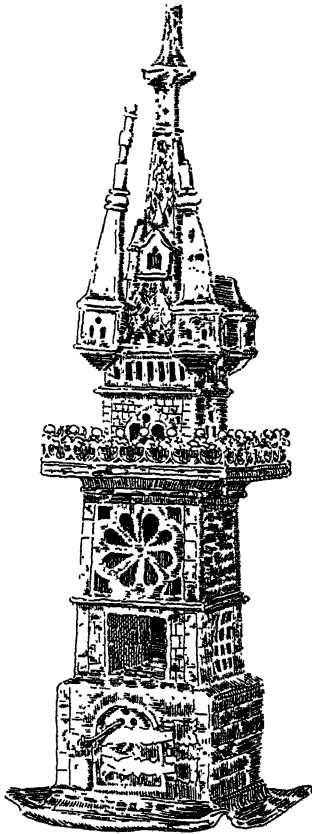




SABBATH EVE IN NETHERLAND JEWISH HOUSEHOLD, 18TH CENTURY

joins in the singing and expounds Torah. The gathering lasts late into the evening. As darkness falls and the spirit of the Sabbath, the *neshamah yeterah*, prepares to depart, the congregation is overwhelmed with a feeling of deep Sabbath reverence and yearning.

The evening service, held after three stars can be seen in the sky, is followed by the recitation of *habdalah*, the "separation"



ORNAMENTAL SILVER SPICE BOX, 15TH CENTURY, GERMANY

of the sacred day from the profane week. This is supplemented by the benediction over the "spices," herbs usually kept in a special box, *bsomim-pushke*. Then comes the benediction over the *habdalah*-candle, as a sign that the weekday flame may now be kindled again, and also in gratitude to the Almighty for the Creation, which began with the words "Let there be light." Finally all wish each other "a good week" and the wheels of everyday life begin to turn again.

Among some of the Orthodox, especially the Hasidim, Saturday evening retains a somewhat festive character; the Sabbath "Queen" is "ushered out" with a special meal called *melavveh-malkah*.

## 2. THE ANNUAL FESTIVALS AND FASTS

On the festivals one may do only such work as is necessary to prepare food. The fast-days commemorate the great historical catastrophes. The Day of Atonement, however, represents an exception; although no food may be eaten, it is, nevertheless, a major festival. In times of crisis for Jewry at large or for an individual community, the religious leaders may proclaim a fast, as was done in the Jewish communities in Europe and elsewhere during the Hitler period. The Fast of Esther is an ancient instance of this custom.

*A. The New Year:* The cycle of Jewish festivals and fasts begins with Rosh ha-Shanah, the start of the New Year, called also *Yom ha-Zikkaron*, "The Day of Remembrance." The first day of the year, according to tradition, is the day of Creation, and thus a day of reckoning and divine judgment, when all of God's creatures pass before the Creator "as sheep pass before the shepherd." The festival of Rosh ha-Shanah is observed on the first and second days of Tishri (corresponding to the latter part of September or the beginning of October) and ushers in the period of the "ten days of penitence," also termed the *Yomim Noraim*, the "Days of Awe." These days afford the opportunity to pray for forgiveness for sins committed during the preceding year, so that the worshiper may appear before the Supreme Judge on the tenth day, the Day of Atonement, with a purified conscience.

The Sunday before Rosh ha-Shanah marks the beginning of the week of *Selihot*, the prayers of forgiveness and penitence, usually recited in the synagogue at dawn, before the morning service begins. In many towns the synagogue beadle made the rounds long before sunrise and summoned the worshipers to the penitential service.

On the eve of Rosh ha-Shanah it is a widespread custom to pray at the graves of parents and pious men. The very devout fast from dawn to sunset during the week from Rosh ha-Shanah to Yom Kippur, except on the Sabbath and the day before Yom Kippur.

The central theme of the Rosh ha-Shanah festival is the idea of the Kingdom of Heaven. At the beginning of the new year God takes His place on the divine throne as Supreme Judge and King of the universe, a conception which is particularly stressed in the three special prayers included in the New Year service: *Malkuyot*, *Zikronot*, *Shofarot*.

The *Malkuyot*, the "kingdom verses," open with the *Aleynu* prayer, later taken over into the daily liturgy, which concludes with a plea for the speedy establishment of God's kingdom on earth:

Therefore do we wait for Thee, O Lord our God, soon to behold Thy mighty glory, when Thou wilt remove the abominations from the earth, and idols shall be exterminated; when the world shall be regenerated by the kingdom of the Almighty, and all the children of flesh invoke Thy name; when all the wicked of the earth shall be turned unto Thee. Then shall all the inhabitants of the world perceive and confess that unto Thee every knee must bend, and every tongue be sworn. Before Thee, O Lord our God, shall they kneel and fall down, and unto Thy glorious name give honor. So will they accept the yoke of Thy kingdom, and Thou shalt be King over them speedily forever and aye. For Thine is the kingdom, and to all eternity Thou wilt reign in glory, as it is written in Thy Torah: 'The Lord shall reign forever and aye.' And it is also said: 'And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; on that day the Lord shall be One and His name be One.'

The theme of the second prayer, *Zikronot*, is God as the merciful Judge:

This day, on which was the beginning of Thy work, is a memorial of the first day. . . Who is not visited on this day? For the remembrance of every creature cometh before Thee, each man's deeds and destiny, his works and ways, his thoughts and schemes, his imaginings and achievements. Happy is the man that forgetteth Thee not.

The third prayer, *Shofarot*, is largely a combination of Biblical verses in which the ram's horn (*shofar*) is mentioned as the



From a Passover Haggadah, Amsterdam, 1695

#### BLOWING THE SHOFAR ON ROSH HA-SHANAH

signal of the Revelation at Sinai and the coming of the Messiah. The sounding of the *shofar* always prepared the people for tidings of great significance. It is thus a characteristic feature of the Rosh ha-Shanah service, greeting the Creator as the King of the Universe.

The Day of Judgment, despite its solemn character, is at the same time a day of hope and rejoicing. In addition to the usual festival greeting, *Gut Yom-tov*, the phrase is added: "May you be inscribed for a good year." It is usual to serve at the Rosh ha-Shanah table foods which symbolize the hope for a happy and prosperous year, such as round *hallah* or apples sweetened with honey. For the same reason one avoids

bitter or salted dishes. After the midday meal the men go to the river for the ceremony of *tashlik*, to beseech God to "cast" into the water all the sins of the previous year: "And Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah VII, 19).

*B. The Day of Atonement:* The ten-day penitential period reaches its climax in the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, a day of fasting and yet at the same time a high festival, a Sabbath of supreme sanctity, in which all forms of labor are strictly prohibited. The principal features of the holy day liturgy are the intoning of confessional prayers and pleas for divine forgiveness for the individual worshiper and for all Israel. But it is only man's sins against God which can thus be forgiven; man's sins against man can find pardon only when the forgiveness of the one injured has been obtained. It is therefore a widespread custom on the Yom Kippur eve to ask forgiveness of one's neighbors and friends for offenses committed, wittingly and unwittingly, during the year that has passed, so that the new year may begin in peace and harmony.

On the eve of Yom Kippur it is considered meritorious to eat heartily and well, looking forward with hope and confidence to the last day of the period of divine judgment and to God's mercy. Many popular customs observed at this time are post-Talmudic; for example, the ritual of *kappores* (kapparot), a symbolic sacrifice for one's sins, a practice which many Rabbinic authorities have sharply condemned. Another custom, probably deriving from some forms of medieval asceticism, is a symbolical flagellation in the synagogue to which even the most pious and prominent of the members of the congregation submit in token of atonement for their sins. On the Yom Kippur eve it is also customary to light two large candles which burn for twenty-four hours, one in the home, the other, a "soul candle," in the synagogue, in memory of deceased parents. At the entrance to the synagogue, before the *Minhah* service on the Yom Kippur eve,

plates are placed for donations to various charities.

The *Kol-Nidre* (All Vows) prayer which the cantor chants three times, introduces the Yom Kippur evening service. This prayer absolves the worshiper from vows and undertakings which do not affect his obligations to his fellowmen. Before the prayer begins, two members of the congregation stand on either side of the cantor, holding the Scrolls of the Torah, thus constituting a symbolical *Bet Din* which permits the presence of "sinners" in the congregation. Together the three intone the formula: "In the tribunal of heaven and the tribunal of the earth, by the permission of God, blessed be He, and by the permission of this holy congregation, we hold it lawful to pray with the transgressors." In the Middle Ages and later, Marranos and even voluntary converts to Christianity would often come to the synagogue on the strength of this dispensation, despite the danger to which they exposed themselves from the outside world. An important part of the Yom Kippur service is the penitential prayer *Al Het*, "Confession of Sins," which itemizes every sin that one may have committed, and which is accompanied by a beating of the breast in confession of guilt and as token of repentance.

The Yom Kippur fast lasts twenty-four hours. The congregation remains in the synagogue throughout the day. One of the most important parts of the service is the recital of the *Abodah*, the solemn atonement ritual, which was performed by the High Priest during the days of the Temple in Jerusalem, to plead divine forgiveness in behalf of the People of Israel:

O Lord, Thy people, the House of Israel, have done wickedly, transgressed, sinned before Thee. O Lord, forgive now the wickedness and transgressions and sins that Thy people, the House of Israel have committed and transgressed and sinned before Thee, as it is written in the Torah of Moses Thy servant, 'For on this day he shall atone for you to

purify you; from all your sins before the Lord.'

During the *Abodah*, the men perform the ceremony of *koreim*, falling to their knees and bowing their heads to the ground as a symbol of submission to the "King of Kings, the Holy one, Blessed be He."

This mood of humility and awareness of sin which permeates the entire Yom Kippur ritual, is eloquently expressed in the prayer attributed to Rabbi Hamnuna and recited in the Yom Kippur *Tefillah*:

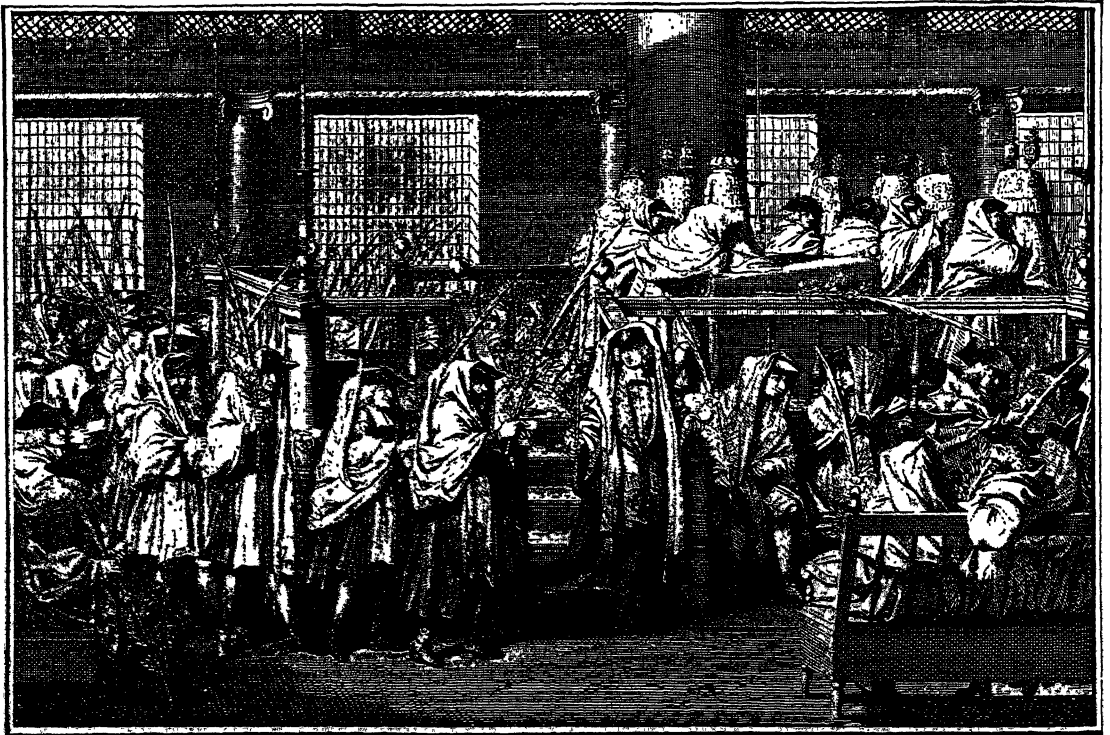
O my God, before I was formed I was as nothing: now that I have been formed I am but as though I had not been formed. Dust am I in my life; how much less am I after my death. Behold, I am before Thee like a vessel filled with shame and confusion. O may it be Thy will, O Lord my God and God of my fathers, that I may sin no more, and as to the sins I have committed, purge them away in Thine abound-

ing compassion, though not by means of affliction and sore diseases.

After the *Neilah*, the concluding service of the day, "when the gates of Mercy close in heaven," the congregation solemnly intones the confession of faith: *Shema Yisrael*—"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one."

*C. The Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot):* Immediately after Yom Kippur it is customary to begin building the *sukkah*, a booth roofed over with tree branches and boughs.

The feast of Sukkot, referred to in the Pentateuch also as "the Feast of Ingathering," begins on the fifteenth day of Tishri, four days after Yom Kippur, and concludes the series of the great harvest festivals. At the same time, since it falls at the beginning of the rainy season, it serves as an occasion of prayer-offering for a plentiful rainfall and an abundant harvest in the coming year. During the days of Sukkot it is pre-



'CARRYING THE LULAV, AND ETROG ON HOSHANA RABBAH'

After Picart, 1723



A PAGE FROM A 14TH CENTURY HAGGADAH



scribed in the Pentateuch "to dwell in booths" in commemoration of Israel's forty years of wandering in the wilderness. The custom is probably also bound up with the old practice of celebrating the harvest festival in fields and vineyards.

The *lulab* (palm branch) and *etrog* (citron), which are carried by the worshipers during the synagogue service, are also symbols of thanksgiving for the harvest. The celebration of the holiday in the course of time became detached from its original relationship to the older agricultural motifs; instead, its historical aspects were emphasized, thus serving to unite the Jew in the Diaspora with the history of Israel during the desert wanderings, and binding together the succeeding generations of the Jewish people. According to a Kabbala tradition, each day the *sukkah* is visited by one of the seven invisible heavenly guests, the *Ushpizin*: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David.

Of the nine days of Sukkot, only the first two and the last two are full festivals. During the five intermediate days, which are semi-holidays (*hol ha-moed*), one may engage in essential activities.

In the period of the Second Temple, the celebration of the festival was marked by a libation of water at the morning service. On the second evening there began the ceremony of the "rejoicing of the drawing of water," a sumptuous and colorful rite celebrated in the Temple courtyard to the accompaniment of music and dance. "A man who has never seen the rejoicing of the water-drawing," says the Mishnah, "has never seen rejoicing in his life." On the seventh day, Hoshana Rabbah, the daily procession of the worshipers, bearing the *lulab* and *etrog* around the altar, and intoning the Hoshana prayer, took on a particularly solemn character. The worshipers circled seven times around the altar, instead of once, as on the other days of the festival. This ancient ritual has carried over to the present time, when the congregants in the synagogue circle the rostrum seven times, bearing the *lulab* and *etrog*.

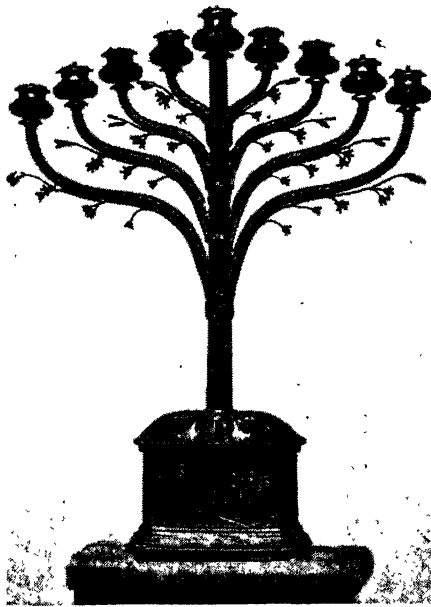
At the end of the procession the congregants each shake a bundle of willow twigs while chanting the Hoshana prayers. Thereafter the twigs are beaten until they are bare of leaves, and the congregation calls out—"Kol mevasser, mevasser ve-omer," hailing the tidings of the Messiah's coming.

Since the sixteenth century it has been customary among some of the pious to stay in the synagogue during the whole night of Hoshana Rabbah, reciting Psalms, the Zohar and Kabbala prayers, a practice based on the tradition that Hoshana Rabbah is the final day for the judgment pronounced during the Days of Awe. Among the Sephardim it is the custom to recite penitential prayers before the morning service, accompanied in many communities by the blowing of the *shofar*.

The last day of Sukkot is Simhat Torah, "the Rejoicing in the Torah," so named because the reading of the Pentateuch on that day completes the annual cycle of weekly portions read in the synagogue. This is the most joyous of all the autumn festivals. It is the custom for the worshipers to perform the ceremony of *hakkefot* in the synagogue, circling the rostrum with the Scrolls of the Torah, both on the evening of Simhat Torah and in the morning. (The Hasidim also perform *hakkefot* on the preceding day). On that day the women are permitted to go into the men's section of the synagogue and kiss the Scrolls as they are borne along in the procession. The children join the *hakkefot* procession, carrying colored paper flags topped with lighted candles. Thus, the entire congregation shares in "the Rejoicing in the Torah." The atmosphere of rejoicing is carried into the streets and the homes, with feasting, dancing and song.

*D. Hanukkah and Purim:* Between the feast of Sukkot and Passover there are two festivals that fall into the category of semi-holidays: Hanukkah in midwinter and Purim ten weeks later. Although workday activities are permitted on these days, there is nevertheless a distinctive ritual at home





COPPER HANUKKAH MENORAH, PADUA, ITALY

and in the synagogue associated with them, and they both have a festive character. Hanukkah commemorates the victories of the Hasmonaeans or Maccabees in the second century B.C.E. and is celebrated for eight days beginning with the 25th day of Kislev, which falls in November or December. A candle is lighted on the first day of the eight-day holiday, and an additional candle each succeeding day, in commemoration of the re-dedication of the Temple.

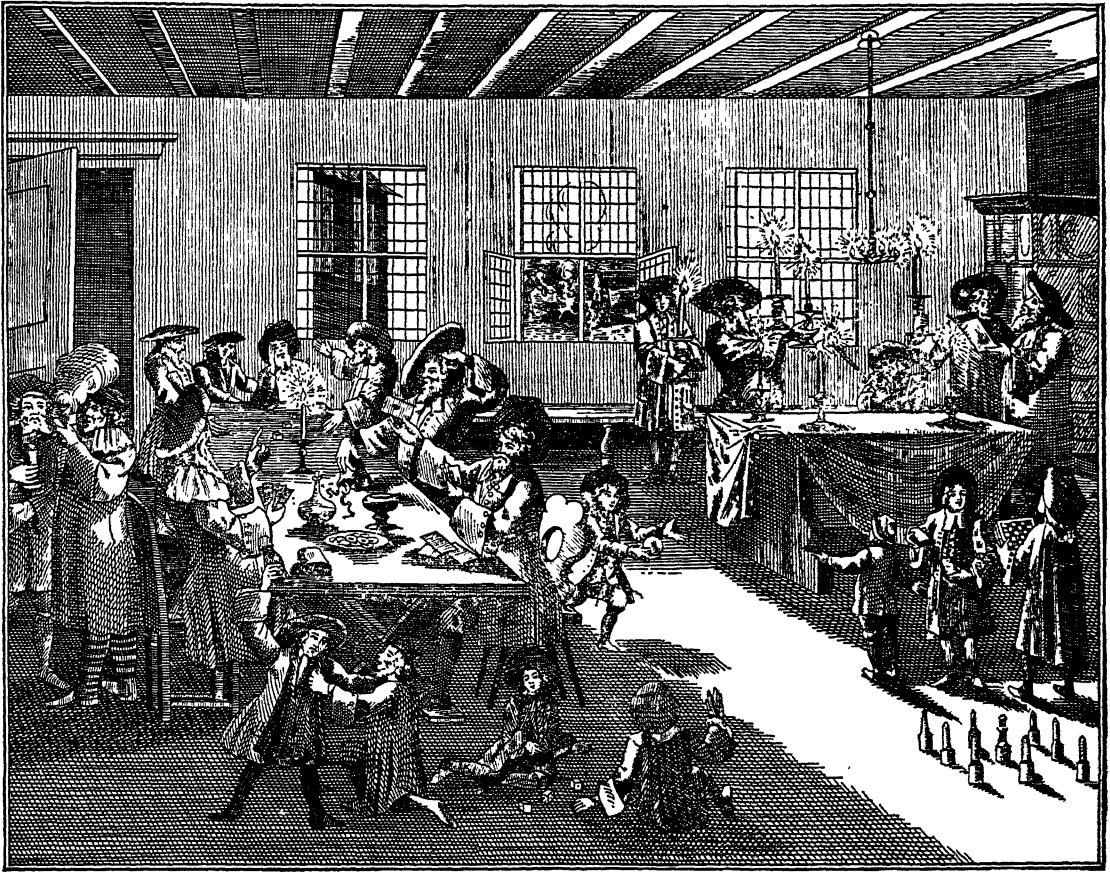
The ritual followed at home is a solemn one. The family gathers around the head of the household as he lights the candles and offers a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the release of His people from the yoke of the oppressor. Presents and *Hanukkah-gelt*, traditional money-gifts, are distributed to the children. The Hanukkah evenings are spent in a joyous manner; even the pious permit themselves the liberty of playing at cards on the holiday. It is a common custom to pose riddles, exchange jokes, and play with *dreidl*. In Eastern and Central

Europe the Hanukkah table usually includes special dishes, particularly *latkes* (pancakes).

On the fourteenth of Adar the festival of Purim is celebrated in commemoration of the miracle which saved the Jews of the Persian Empire from the wicked Haman, the event related in the Book of Esther. The eve of Purim is a fast day, the Fast of Esther, in observance of Queen Esther's fast before going to King Ahasuerus to beg mercy for her people. On the Purim evening and on the morning of the day itself, the Book of Esther is read aloud in the synagogue from a parchment scroll, the *megillat Esther*. This reading is attended by the entire community, including women and children. The children come equipped with *Haman-klappers* or *gragers*, types of noise-makers, and whirl them and stamp their feet every time the Reader mentions the name "Haman." In many communities in the Oriental countries it is the custom for the children to hang up an effigy of Haman and set fire to it. At the Purim feast, the *Purim-seudah*, it is customary to



From Leusden, "*Philologus Hebraeo-Mixtus*," 1657  
PURIM PLAYERS



From Kirchner, "Juedisches Ceremoniel", 1726

#### PURIM EVE GAMES

drink a good deal of wine, even to excess. There is a Talmudic dictum that one should drink on Purim until he can no longer distinguish between the phrases "blessed be Mordecai" and "cursed be Haman." At the table the celebrants sing jolly Purim songs about Haman's defeat and the deliverance of the Jews. Children and grown-ups don costumes and play the parts of the heroes of the story of Esther. Students of the yeshivah also stage burlesque Purim plays, and in many yeshivot it was the custom to elect a "Purim rabbi," who would deliver a mock discourse in the style of *pilpul*. Gifts, *shalah-manot*, are exchanged among friends and relatives, usually raisins, Purim cakes, almonds, wine, *Haman-tashen*, etc. Gifts of money are also distributed among the poor. In mod-

ern Palestine, Purim is celebrated with a grand carnival.

*E. Passover:* Shortly after Purim, preparations begin for the great festival of Passover (*Pesah*), which commemorates the liberation of the Children of Israel from bondage in Egypt. The Passover feast begins on the fifteenth day of Nisan, which coincides with the latter part of March or the first part of April. The holiday is also referred to in the Pentateuch as *Hag ha-Matzot*, the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The principal feature of the holiday is the ban against the use or consumption of *hametz*, leavened bread or any foodstuffs, including beverages, which contain leavened dough or its products. This ban extends even to the use of dishes or utensils which have had contact with *hametz*; if the



MATZOT BAKERY, LIDA, POLAND

Photo A. Kacyzna

utensil is made of metal it may be "purified" in boiling water. As a consequence, the orthodox Jewish household keeps on hand from season to season a special set of Passover dishes and even tableware. The prohibition of *hametz*, according to Biblical tradition, is in commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt when the Israelites were unable to bake their customary bread and instead prepared flat cakes from unleavened flour. These are the *matzot* which feature the Passover holiday.

In the days preceding the holiday the home is thoroughly cleaned. On the evening before the first *Seder*, the head of the household proceeds with the ceremony of "*bedikat hametz*" (searching for leaven). Holding a candle, he inspects every corner of the house to make sure that no bread-crumbs or other *hametz* traces have been left anywhere. In the morning before the

first *Seder* night the last remnants of *hametz* found in the house are burned.

The festival lasts eight days (in Palestine, seven). The four intermediate days are, however, as in the case of Sukkot, *hol hamoed*, that is, semi-holidays. Passover is celebrated in its full splendor on the first two evenings, the *Seder*-evenings, which are conducted according to an elaborate ritual observed for centuries. During the *Seder* those around the table read the *Haggadah*, the narrative of the miracles connected with the Exodus from Egypt, with the addition of various prayers, hymns and songs. On the festive table is placed the *Seder* plate: three *matzot*, symbolically named Cohen, Levi, Israel, and covered with a napkin; a roasted bone, as a memento of the Passover offering at the Temple; an egg; and some horseradish or bitter herbs (*maror*), as a symbol of the bitterness of

the lot of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt. The ceremony begins, as at other festivals, with the *Kiddush* benediction. The ritual proper opens with the words: "This is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in Egypt: whoever is hungry come and eat;

national rejoicing." Thus it is a duty to provide the needy with the means for observing the Passover and celebrating the *Seder*. According to the Mishnah, even the poorest man must drink at least four cups of wine each of the *Seder* evenings.



17TH CENTURY SEDER PLATE

whoever is in need celebrate Passover with us." Thereupon the youngest child of the family asks the "Four Questions." To these the head of the family—the "king" of the *Seder*—replies by reciting the words of the *Haggadah*: "Slaves were we unto Pharaoh in Egypt. . ." and the family joins in reading the text.

The spirit of Passover is one of national unity and individual as well as national freedom. In keeping with this it is required that no individual be left out from the

Strangers and wayfarers are invited to take a place at the Passover table, and the household servants sit together with the family. The head of the house reclines on cushions, as a symbol that he is a "free man." A special cup of wine is poured for the Prophet Elijah, the herald of the Messiah who, according to tradition, visits all Jewish households on the *Seder* night.

*F. Lag ba-Omer*: The second evening of Passover opens the *sefirah* period, that is, the "counting" of the days of the seven



From Picart

SEDER CEREMONY AMONG NETHERLAND JEWS, EARLY 18TH CENTURY

weeks between Passover and Shabuot. The *sefirah* period, with the exception of the festive Passover week itself, is regarded as a time of sadness. It is forbidden to cut one's hair, and to hold weddings or other festive events in the interval between the holidays. The restrictions, however, are lifted on the thirty-third day, Lag ba-Omer, which is a semi-holiday. According to tradition, this day marks the anniversary of the cessation of the plague which afflicted the pupils of Rabbi Akiba and took the lives of many of them. Lag ba-Omer is celebrated with special solemnity in Palestine. There is a tradition that the Tanna Simeon ben Yohai, the great Kabbala authority, died on Lag ba-Omer. Up to the present time pilgrims come to visit his grave at Meran, near Safed. On the eve of Lag ba-Omer a great bonfire is lit near the place of his burial, and the whole night and the day are spent in prayer, in singing hymns and in ecstatic dances. In

modern Palestine the day is a merry children's festival; in Eastern Europe the young people were freed from school and usually spent the day playing in the fields and forests.

*G. Shabuot:* Shabuot, the Feast of Weeks, which is observed on the sixth and seventh day of Sivan, is also referred to in the Bible as *hag ha-katsir*, the feast of harvest, or *yom ha-bikkurim*, the day of the first fruits. It is customary to decorate the synagogue with branches and fragrant flowers. Shabuot is also observed as the date of the Revelation of Sinai, a theme which occupies the central place in the Shabuot liturgy. A custom introduced by the sixteenth century mystics is the practice of staying up the whole night in order to read the *tikkun Shabuot*. This consists of reciting the beginning and the end of each weekly portion of the Torah and of the Prophets, as well as of the first and last

section of every tractate of the Mishnah, excerpts from Kabbalistic writings, and a summary of the 613 commandments. This is considered as a symbolic renewal of the Sinaitic Covenant. There is a popular belief that on the Shabuot night the heavens split open, and that man comes close to his Creator.

*H. The Season of Mourning:* The three-week period of mourning between the fast of the Seventeenth of Tammuz and the Ninth of Ab, commemorates the last days of the Temple at Jerusalem. The Seventeenth of Tammuz is the anniversary of the day on which the Roman attackers succeeded in breaching the defenses of Jerusalem, and the day on which the daily sacrifices in the Temple were discontinued. The fast extends from dawn to sunset, and penitential prayers are recited during the morning service at the synagogue. During the ensuing three weeks it is customary to refrain from celebrating weddings or wearing any personal adornment. The mourning pattern of the "three weeks" becomes still more rigorous in the last "nine days" ending with the Ninth of Ab. The pious abstain from meat and wine and from bathing. The Ninth of Ab is the anniversary of the destruction of both the First and Second Temples, and is thus the most meaningful of the Jewish national days of mourning.

The fast of the Ninth of Ab begins at sundown and lasts until sundown on the following day. As on the Day of Atonement, it is forbidden to eat and drink, and it is required to abstain from all physical comforts or luxuries, such as washing or using salves or oil for the skin or scalp, or wearing leather shoes. It is even forbidden to study Torah, except the Book of Job and those parts of the Bible and Talmud which refer to the destruction of the Temple, and sections dealing with calamities endured by

the people. Until midday one may sit only on the floor or on a low bench, as is the custom during the period of *shivah*. Neither the *tefillin* nor the *tallit* may be worn during the morning service. It is not permitted to start the day's work before midday.

The last meal before the fast, eaten before sunset, is confined to a single course. Many people limit themselves to a hard-boiled egg, or a dish of lentils, and a *bagel* with a sprinkling of ashes. All ornaments are removed from the synagogue; it is even customary to remove the curtain of the Ark. The synagogue is dimly illuminated, and dusk and shadows hover over the congregation.

In Sephardic synagogues the walls are draped in black, and black covers are placed over the Scrolls of the Torah. After a subdued evening service, the Book of Lamentation is read in a mournful chant, followed by *kinot* (liturgical dirges). The ceremony is conducted with special solemnity among the Oriental Sephardim. All members of the congregation sprinkle ashes on their heads. The Reader calls on the Scroll of the Torah in the open Ark to mourn together with all of Israel, with the words: "Ashes in place of beauty," an allusion to the verse in Isaiah (LXI, 3), he throws a handful of ashes into the Ark.

After the morning service, it is customary to visit the graves of one's kinfolk. In Palestine visits are paid to the graves of the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Tannaim, and other pious men.

But even the Ninth of Ab has its hopeful side. There is a Talmudic tradition that the Messiah was born on the day the Temple was destroyed. The Sabbath following the fast is a day of consolation, *Shabbat Nahamu*. The *Haftarah* read in the synagogue on that day is Isaiah XL, which opens with the words: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God."

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# MODERN CURRENTS IN JEWISH SOCIAL AND NATIONAL LIFE

Ben-Adir

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## INTRODUCTION

Modern currents in Jewish social and national life made their appearance to-

gether with the emancipation of the Jews in the West and their struggle for emancipation in the countries of Eastern Europe. The mainspring of these modern movements lay in the new, radically-altered relationships which were in the process of being established between Jewry and the peoples among whom the Jews lived. For many generations these had constituted two alien and separate worlds. The Jews were segregated from the rest of the population, and not by the external ghetto walls alone; their isolation was basically voluntary, the social and spiritual expression of their will to withdraw into themselves. This does not imply that Jewish life was never affected by the trends and influences current in the outer world. Jews lived in close proximity to their neighbors and associated with them on the central plane of daily life—the economic. These currents and influences, however, penetrated Jewish life unheeded, through invisible channels, as it were. Thus the Jewish group, strictly observing its seclusion, neither felt nor suspected that it was absorbing alien elements and making them its own.

Throughout the generations prior to the emancipation, the basic character of Jewish-Christian relationships remained unaffected by the various changes of concrete form through which they passed in one country or another. The nations in question regarded themselves as the indigenous inhabitants, the rightful owners of the land, and viewed the Jews, even though they might have dwelt in the land from time immemorial—and not infrequently, before the majority of their neighbors—as aliens, who were suffered only as long as there was need



for them and to the extent that they could be of use to the dominant population.

The Jews likewise regarded themselves as aliens in their countries of residence. They had been driven out of their own land, they believed, because of their sins and had to endure exile till the coming of the Messiah, who would restore them to their homeland. The persecutions and the hostility of the outside world made them believe all the more passionately that they were a "chosen people;" and thus, in spite of their degradation, they were able to feel superior to their oppressors.

This was the general situation, until the era of enlightenment and the rise of capitalism wrecked the foundations of the two separated worlds and radically altered their relationship. The modern Jewish movements were born in response to the challenge of the new age.

## I. EMANCIPATION, HASKALAH AND ASSIMILATION

### 1. WESTERN EUROPE

The great French Revolution, which abolished the system of estates and privileges and spread the glad tidings of the rights of man, of liberty and equality, irrespective of creed or origin, quite logically included the Jews in the general enfranchisement. Besides, capitalism in its spring-tide could properly utilize the energy, industry and skill of the urban Jew with his international financial and commercial connections. The granting of equal rights to the Jews was always conditioned, however, upon the full acknowledgment on their part that they were not members of a Jewish nation but merely nationals of the countries in which they resided. At that time this could only mean that Jews were integral members of the general community, distinguished merely by their religious persuasion—Frenchmen, Germans, etc., of the Mosaic faith. Around this central issue raged the struggle between the advocates and opponents of Jewish emancipation. Even the proponents of emancipa-

tion held it to be an axiom that if the Jews were a separate people, or wished to regard themselves as such, they would have to be considered aliens and denied equality. That warm advocate of Jewish emancipation, Clermont-Tonnerre, formulated this view in a neat epigram before the French National Assembly (December 23, 1791): "To the Jews as a nation, we owe nothing; to the Jews as human beings, everything."

How was all this reflected in the Jewish world? The turmoil of the new era and of the enlightenment, universal in scope, broke through the ghetto-walls, and there, too, aroused enthusiasm for the coming new world, which would substitute the reign of freedom and equality, of reason and science, for the rule of hidebound tradition, servitude and oppression. Precisely in the close atmosphere of the ghetto, where the pressure of religious tradition was all-powerful and where for numerous generations the whole of life, collective and individual, had been held in a vise, the fresh air of pure reason, positive knowledge and free inquiry rushed in with a compelling force and called forth as lively a response as anywhere. The Jews were stirred by the great hope that at last the endless cycle of oppression and degradation would be ended. They were to be free citizens of their country, equals among equals in a common fraternal community in a world no longer alien. Besides, a developing capitalism opened up vast opportunities for segments of the Jewish people to employ their energies in those spheres of economic life for which they were best fitted.

When the question of emancipation arose it was natural, therefore, that the Jews of Western Europe should be ready without demur to repudiate their separatism and seclusion, and publicly acknowledge that they were not a distinct people but a purely religious community. They acquiesced in this doctrine, not merely because they could not resist the temptations of emancipation but also because of inner conviction. Nationalism, which was sub-

sequently to become such a mighty factor and to play so decisive a role in the social and political life of Europe, was then still in its infancy; at any rate, it had not yet become articulate and crystallized. In general, there prevailed at that time the vague notion of man, as citizen of the world or as citizen of a particular country. The Jew thought he could fit neatly into either category and thus rid himself of his Jewish identity.

This was the central issue which in great measure determined the character of all modern Jewish social trends. The conflicts which later developed among these movements all revolved around this issue. The apparently simple, negative formula, "Jews are not a separate people," created for both the Jew as individual and Jewry as a whole, obligations they were in the end unable to fulfill. The difficulty lay in the sharp conflict between the formula and the world of reality, where its violation was, indeed, unavoidable. Even those Jews who denied Jewish national separateness were far more deeply rooted in national traditions than was the case with the relatively young nations in whose midst they lived. The thousands of years of autonomous historical development of the Jewish people had transformed them into an entity with a fixed and unmistakable national character. True enough, the Jews had lost their territory and their national independence many centuries before; yet the very lack of these normal attributes of a national life had drawn them even closer together, and consolidated their national-spiritual energies.

But the promissory note which had been issued had to be paid; at least, an effort to pay it had to be made. It was the Jewish religion which was called upon to cover the debt: no Jewish nation exists, nor is its existence permissible, but a Jewish religious community does and has the right to exist, provided it discards all national features. But here, too, serious difficulties arose; the Jewish religion was deeply national in character; it was organically bound up with Jewish national hopes and

aspirations. Accordingly, a trend developed to reform this religion and, in adapting it to the demands of the new era, to extinguish its national soul. As a result it lost its unique significance and character and became merely a general covering for the real essence of the communities in Western Europe which, even under the existing conditions, were unable to free themselves from their national character.

The lot of the Jewish individual, too, became more difficult. On his shoulders rested the entire burden of the assimilative process, the payment required by the promissory note of Jewish national liquidation. What did this actually mean? It meant the uprooting of his national identity, the rejection of his national ego. There could be no moral justification for such an act which required a man to acknowledge that his national ego was of a lower order, inferior in quality, and one which he must strive to eradicate.

In the springtide of the emancipation period, however, when the assimilationists were still driven by a revolutionary impetus, there was a positive content in their ideology: the striving for light and freedom and for liberation from the twofold internal and external yoke; the drive toward modern knowledge and culture, intellectual independence and creativeness. The enlightenment phase of the revolutionary mission which the assimilationists accepted as their own, soon reached its fulfilment in Western Europe. Here the comparatively small Jewish communities promptly adopted and adjusted themselves to the patterns of the surrounding culture—a process which, in addition to their great adaptability, demonstrated their insatiable thirst for knowledge. To preach enlightenment to the Jewish population was now superfluous. The national factor, which at the beginning had put its mark on the *Haskalah* movement, as reflected in the new Hebrew periodicals of the movement (*Ha-Meassef* and the like), gradually dissipated with the adoption of other languages.

In Germany where the fight for emancipation was more protracted and more arduous than in France or England, and where the Jewish community was comparatively larger and geographically closer to the mass communities of Eastern Europe, the assimilation movement produced over a considerable period of time significant creative forces. From apologetic literature, which undertook to demonstrate the eligibility of Jews to equal citizenship, this movement turned to research on the Jewish past: thus arose the "scientific study of Judaism" (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*). In this connection, in addition to Moses Mendelssohn, the founding father of the enlightenment movement, the work of Geiger, Jost, Zunz and Graetz may be mentioned. With the achievement of emancipation, however, and the consequent exhaustion of the accumulated national-cultural energy, the assimilationist trend in Germany, too, gradually lost its positive creative content. There remained only the individual's longing to root out his "inferior" Jewish national ego, so that the surrounding world might no longer be aware of it, and to absorb instead the national spirit of the dominant people. This, in a sense, gave emancipated European Jewry an inferiority complex, and produced that social-psychological condition which Ahad Haam later characterized as "slavery in freedom."

## 2. EASTERN EUROPE

A quite different situation evolved in Eastern Europe in the Haskalah and emancipation movements, as well as in the trend toward assimilation. Among compact masses living an isolate and intensive national life, all social-psychological processes develop very slowly, and must overcome the powerful inertia of a huge mass; hence, the rejection of national identity in these communities, even in purely external respects, was quite impossible. This, at the very outset, negated the basic theory on which the Western emancipation movement was predicated: the fiction that the Jews were not a nationality but merely a religi-

ous community. Consequently in Eastern Europe—and in Russia especially—where the road to emancipation was hardest and longest, the upper bourgeoisie among the Jews was impelled to draw a line between itself and the Jewish masses. This left its imprint upon all the manifestations of the struggle for emancipation conducted by this upper stratum.

True, in Western Europe certain groups originally also made attempts to separate themselves from the rest of the Jewish community, as for example the Sephardic Jews in France and, in Germany, the followers of David Friedlaender, a disciple of Mendelssohn. These, however, were but passing episodes which left no permanent marks. In the end the Jewish communities in Western Europe developed a more or less unified character and policy which kept pace with the revolutionary trends of the general population. Notwithstanding the avowed assimilationist character of their policy, this gave them a certain objective national significance. It was quite different in Eastern Europe. There, especially in Russia, the upper bourgeois circles had, in the course of many decades, followed a basic policy of cleavage from the Jewish masses, so that their desire for emancipation bore a pronounced anti-national character, sometimes prompting them on to the very limits of self-abasement.

Characteristic of their attitude is a remarkable document, "A Very Humble Petition," which a group of "honorable Jewish merchants" addressed in June 1856 to Alexander II. Here complaint is made of the injustice which oppresses all Jews alike, "from the artisan to the first guild merchant, from the private soldier to the Magister of Arts," and the request is made that "distinctions" be introduced. "Our present petition," the document goes on, "is to the effect that our gracious sovereign may bestow his kindness upon us, and, by distinguishing the grain from the chaff, may be pleased to accord a few moderate privileges to the most educated among us, to wit: (1) Equal rights with the other

[Russian] subjects or with the Karaite Jews to the educated and well-deserving Jews who possess the title of Honorary Citizens, to the merchants affiliated for a number of years with the first or second guild and distinguished by their business integrity, to the soldiers who have served irreproachably in the army; (2) the right of residence outside the Pale of Settlement "to the best among the artisans" who possess laudatory certificates from the artisans guilds. The privileges thus accorded to "the best among us" will help to realize the consummation of the Government's desire "that the sharply marked traits which distinguish the Jews from the native Russians should be eradicated and that the Jews should in their way of thinking and acting become akin to the latter." Once placed outside their secluded "Pale," the Jews "will succeed in emulating the praiseworthy qualities of the genuine Russians, and thus striving for culture and useful endeavor will become universal."

Thanks to the compact nature of East European Jewry, the Haskalah movement likewise assumed an entirely different character from that in Western Europe, and this was equally true of the fate of the assimilationist trend. First, the Haskalah movement had to wage a long and extremely hard fight against the mighty forces of traditional Judaism, tested in the millennial struggle for national survival. The latter defended its position and its right to undivided rule over the minds and hearts of the masses with great stubbornness and singleness of purpose. And in this "holy war," in this defense against the Haskalah peril, there were united the formerly hostile camps of *Mitnagdim* and *Hasidim*. Second, the storm which in Western Europe had overturned the foundations of the old world, was appreciably weaker as it approached the East, where the development of capitalism began later and proceeded at a slower pace. Russia, the great agrarian land, the state with the largest Jewish population, which was destined to play a central role in the development of

modern Jewish movements, had in the first half of the nineteenth century hardly stirred in its travail. An all-powerful despotic regime reigned and brutally repressed any emergence of a new life or of free thought. It was not by way of the alien Russian world, but through the Jewish communities in the neighboring countries—Germany and Austria—that the first runlets of the Haskalah trickled.

Naturally, the advance guard of Haskalah pioneers, who challenged the mighty fortress of traditional Judaism in Eastern Europe, could not prevail against it as easily as those who stormed the Western citadels. As a matter of fact, their ambition was modest; they sought only to let in a little light and fresh air into the lives of the Jewish masses. They were themselves deeply rooted in traditional Judaism. They did not wish to break the golden chain; they wished merely to forge it in an atmosphere of freedom and enlightenment. In Russia, therefore, and in neighboring Galicia the Haskalah movement was in essence thoroughly nationalist and was free from the assimilationist tendencies that characterized it in Western Europe. The national aspect of the Haskalah in Russia and Galicia first found expression in the revival of Hebrew and in the creation of a neo-Hebraic literature. For the German *Maskilim* the Hebrew revival was only a temporary phenomenon; the beginning they made with the Hebrew journal, *Ha-Meassef*, was soon abandoned and German became their medium of expression. Among the East European *Maskilim*, on the contrary, Hebrew was both a program and a principle. True enough, monumental works on Jewish history and other subjects had been produced by German-Jewish scholars, but these were only monuments to a disappearing Judaism. This *Wissenschaft* was not organically bound up with the life of the Jewish community in Germany and did not advance its national development. It was not a link in a living, enduring chain, but the final chapter of a completed work. The Haskalah literature

in Galicia and Russia, on the contrary, no matter how naïve it was at times, was a forward step in the rise of a Jewish national literature and culture. Rappaport, Krochmal, Weiss, Wessely, Erter and others in Galicia; Isaac Baer Levinsohn, Abraham and Micah Joseph Lebensohn, Abraham Mapu, J. L. Gordon, Peretz Smolenskin and many others in Russia, prepared the ground for the later flowering of Hebrew literature, which eventually fathered the revival of Hebrew in Palestine.

While the Hebrew literature of the Haskalah was designed to appeal to the well-educated middle-class element, both in Galicia and Russia, at the very birth of the Haskalah a small rivulet was breaking through, a more popular strain, which was headed toward the common folk. This rivulet, growing ever wider and running deeper, was eventually to become a powerful national and nationalizing factor. It was the beginning not only of the modern development of literature and culture in Yiddish, which has since added such imposing achievements to its credit, but the matrix of all those modern social currents which are organically bound up with the folk tongue.

In one important respect, however, the Haskalah movement in Russia, in its initial stage, lagged behind the movement in Western Europe. Whereas in the West it had sprung up as a revolutionary force and developed in unison with the revolutionary trends of the environment, in Russia it hitched its destiny to that of the despotic régime and sought to carry out its program with the aid of brute governmental power. This was due, in no small degree, to the fact that the Haskalah movement had not emerged out of Russian-Jewish soil, but was a foreign growth that had been transplanted. The first pioneers of the Haskalah movement were strangers to Russian culture and to the progressive tendencies in Russian society. They drew their cultural sustenance not from Russian but from German sources. Their weakness and lack of roots made them resort to clumsy tactics.

They faced a solid wall and felt that without assistance they could not break it.

The essential point, however, was that the Haskalah leaders imagined they could dovetail their program into the one the despotic government wished to impose on Jewish life. Indeed, within the harsh and inconsistent Jewish policy of Nicholas I there were tendencies in agreement with some of the basic ideas which the *Maskilim* themselves preached: education, on the one hand, agricultural labor and crafts in place of brokerage and trade, on the other. That their program was to be enforced by means of compulsion and violence did not deter the *Maskilim*; if Jews did not wish to follow the right road willingly, they would have to be compelled to do so. They did not realize that in supporting a brutal and hated power from which their fellow-Jews had suffered so much, they were in effect digging a chasm between themselves and the rest of the Jewish population, that they were repelling rather than winning over their people to their ideas. They failed to reckon with the fact that in the sphere of spiritual life Jews, in the course of their long martyrdom, had well learned how to protect themselves against violence and compulsion.

What could not be attained by such methods did, nevertheless, become a reality, when from the outside world the fresh winds of political and social liberation began to blow. The defeat of Russia in the Crimean War in 1856 emphatically showed that its economic and political backwardness and spiritual paralysis had made this huge land, rich in natural resources but a giant *golem* with feet of clay, a country unable to withstand the impact of the advanced capitalist nations of Western Europe. Finally, therefore, the gates had to be opened, and the first concessions which followed were the emancipation of the serfs, and the loosening of the fetters which had limited free social development and initiative and had stifled cultural progress. Simultaneously, the unbearable pressure that weighed down the Jewish

population had to be relieved and new opportunities had to be provided, especially for that Jewish group which was pre-eminently fitted to give momentum to the wheels of capitalist progress.

The Jews were not slow in responding. They put forth their entire effort and accumulated energies, which were indeed urgently seeking an outlet. They rushed through the open gate and soon a privileged Jewish bourgeoisie and university-trained intelligentsia arose, distinguished from the rest of the Jewish population and rewarded with privileges. And it seemed that the same assimilation process—with its ideology and practical consequences—that had occurred in Western Europe, was about to repeat itself here. Soon, however, it found itself face to face with the peculiar difficulty noted above, a difficulty which sapped its moral strength: the undeniable existence of a compact, deeply nationalist Jewish community. The Western assimilationist formula paraphrased by them, "Russians of the Mosaic faith," here sounded false and hollow. No one really believed in their formula, neither the non-Jewish world to which it was primarily directed nor even the assimilationists themselves. The noble edifice of the assimilationists reeked with crude career-opportunism. Their plea for personal privileges and immunities for themselves showed up the cynicism of their ideology.

Even the young assimilationists of the idealistic group, who had been swept into the general revolutionary current then prevailing in Russia found their moral position no easy one. The air of the political and social springtide penetrated the ghetto and aroused in large sections of Jewish youth the yearning for a new life. A thirst for knowledge and education awoke in them. This time, however, it was not a transplanted alien root but an organic and indigenous growth. The cultural sources which nourished these groups were thoroughly Russian, progressive, and radical. Their guides and teachers were Dobrolybov, Pisarev, Chernyshevsky, Nekrasov,

Mikhailovsky and others. In their enthusiasm for the idea of the "common folk" (*Narodnichestvo*), which then dominated Russian radical circles, these youthful idealists promptly abandoned the Jewish masses and identified themselves with the Russian peasantry which, in the prevailing philosophy of the time, was thought to embody the highest social virtues.

The Jewish people, which had no peasant class, was thought to be without merit and to have lost its right to group existence. But this socialist and revolutionary doctrine of assimilationism bore within itself the seeds of insincerity and moral disintegration. The Jewish youth, children of a people which had behind it a rich cultural history and generations of martyrs for an ideal, callously denied that people the very right to exist. And above all, they themselves, who not infrequently came from the most oppressed and downtrodden sections of their people, foresook these unfortunate step-children of history, who more than any others needed their aid, guidance and leadership. No idealistic cloak could cover the immorality of this assimilationist ideology.

In addition to this main obstacle—the mass character of the Jewish community—there was yet another, a turgid element that muddled the assimilationist ideology in Eastern Europe. This was the fact that both Austria and Russia, the two countries with large Jewish populations, were multinational states, where oppressed minorities strove to free themselves from the alien yoke and establish an autonomous national life. Since the Jews put forth no such claims, a difficult and not infrequently dangerous situation resulted. Within the complex of struggles going on among the minority populations themselves, there was at the same time an insistence on the part of each of them to count the Jews in their midst as their own nationals, so as to strengthen their individual political potential. It followed that a particularly intense hatred was vented on those elements of the Jewish population which joined an oppos-

ing camp or adhered to the dominant state's imperial policy. This latter, for example, was the case in Bohemia where the Jewish orientation was mostly a pro-German one. Evidently in so densely charged a nationalistic atmosphere, there could be no place for any "cosmopolitan" idyll, and the "cosmopolitan" fig-leaf could not hide the moral weakness and political absurdity of any assimilationist ideology.

Because of all these factors and, in addition, the mounting tide of governmental and social anti-Semitism in Russia in the seventies of the last century, it necessarily followed that all moral content and political significance were emptied from the assimilationist ideology. Thus was prepared the ideological ferment which came at the beginning of the eighties amid the horrors of the pogroms that swept over well-nigh the entire Pale of Settlement.

## II. SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL FERMENT IN THE EARLY EIGHTIES

### 1. AM OLAM AND BILU

The early eighties of the last century must be regarded as one of the most significant turning-points in Jewish history. The pogrom wave, which in 1881 inundated such a large section of the Pale, shook the Jewish spirit to its very foundations. Among the intelligentsia in particular, it produced a radical social and spiritual upheaval. This inner turmoil, however, was of a singular character: its mood was not one of dejection or despair, as national catastrophes of such magnitude generally call forth, but rather of extraordinary passion and unrest. Pain, sorrow and indignation were fused with faith and hope, with courage, alertness and daring. New horizons, still nebulous, to be sure, came into view. The first reaction of the Russian-Jewish population was a desire to seek refuge abroad, to leave the barbaric Russian land and escape to freedom. Immediately masses of men, women and children were on the move to the southwestern frontier.

It was among the most sensitive part of the Jewish population, the intelligentsia, that the confusion prevailing among the Jewish masses first crystallized, finding expression in the two movements, Am Olam and Bilu. The Jewish radicals who, dominated by an assimilationist ideology, had moved far away from the Jewish masses, were stunned by the sudden turn of events. For some of them the violent shock of the pogrom wave overturned their philosophy completely. Their enthusiastic faith in the Russian people had been betrayed and their hearts were full of pain for the suffering of their own brethren. They smashed their "cosmopolitan" idol and in their repentance went to the opposite extreme, the ideal of a Jewish national revival in the ancient fatherland. But even those intellectuals who did not repudiate their discredited ideology and continued faithful to socialist ideals, also felt guilty toward their persecuted and harassed brethren, and determined to return and identify their destiny with that of their own people.

The characteristic attitude of both groups was the striving for a new beginning in Jewish history, the reconstruction of their personal lives and the life of their people on new foundations, on the foundations of farm-labor, which was held to be the most important and the worthiest form of all work. This striving, which drew its sustenance from the Haskalah movement, was strengthened and idealized by efforts of the Russian radicals to elevate the peasantry. The Jewish intelligentsia, including the extreme assimilationists, had been deeply disturbed by the resurgence of anti-Semitism in the late seventies, and saw in a return to the soil a sure protection against that menace and a clear road to the winning of equal rights, as well as to a kind of assimilation with the Russian people. "The salvation of the Jews," wrote the journal *Razsviet*, at that time the organ of the Jewish assimilationists, "lies in their assimilation with the peoples among whom they live. Their task is to take over the mores, the way of life and views developed

by other civilized nations, and to adapt themselves to their mode of life." The natural inference was: "We must return to farm-labor. In the vast land of soil-tillers, among the peasantry, the Jew must also become a tiller of the soil, a peasant, as once he was. Only then, when substantial sections of the Jewish masses become tillers of the soil, will Jews become full citizens of the Russian land. Such a renewal or rebirth is just as possible as the contrary change was in ancient times, and this new transformation is as necessary and unavoidable for the Russian Jews, as was the other in its period. If we do not make this change voluntarily, our sufferings will force us to choose this road—the road to the good, to moral growth and material improvement in our mode of life."

It was only natural, therefore, that when in the wake of the pogrom wave the question "Whither?" arose, even that part of the radical intelligentsia which looked forward to a settlement in free America should envisage such a life in the light of the ideal of farm-labor. The young Am Olam groups which appeared spontaneously in Kiev, Odessa and elsewhere, were clear about their goal. They wished to establish in North America farm colonies on a socialist basis, to serve as models for the migrating masses which would follow them. Nor were they alone in advocating such a program. "The idealistic phase of the movement drew in many quite ordinary Jews as well," writes Abraham Cahan, who at that time shared the journey with Jewish immigrants from Russia to America. "These men were as enthusiastic as the intelligentsia. Jewish artisans and traders, who had not led particularly hard lives in Russia, sold their possessions and joined groups bound for America, there to create a new Jewish life. They did this with religious enthusiasm, and provided many examples of self-sacrifice."

The Am Olam movement was destined, however, to be but a historical episode. America, great and free, was then experiencing its feverish industrial development

and was quite unsuited for socialist experiments. The poor Jewish emigrants from the cities and small towns in Russia were soon drawn into urban occupations. A few groups of intellectuals tried to establish socialist colonies. These, however, soon met the fate which similar attempts by Utopian Socialists had encountered when they tried to create islands of communism in an ocean of bourgeois capitalism.

## 2. HIBBAT ZION

Altogether different was the fate and historical role of the Bilu groups, which formed part of the Hibbat Zion movement, the forerunner of Zionism. These groups drew nourishment from age-old wells and responded to ideals and aspirations deeply rooted in Jewish history. The yearning for Palestine, the dream of redemption, of deliverance from exile—these were motivations that had dominated virtually the whole of Jewish history from the destruction of the Temple to the emancipation era. The nascent nationalist movement, however, introduced one innovation in harmony with the spirit of the modern world. It strove to secularize all the motivations of a religious or mystic character by embodying them in economic and political action.

The soil had been somewhat prepared for Bilu several decades earlier, before the catastrophe of 1881, partly under the influence of external factors: the rise of European nationalism in the nineteenth century; the consolidation and revival of a number of nationalities, both large and small; the progressive disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, which precipitated a whole series of problems in the Near East. All this had inspired certain statesmen and writers to expound the idea of the restoration of the Jewish people to Palestine. As early as 1847, Benjamin Disraeli (later Lord Beaconsfield) had published his novel *Tancred*, in which he developed the idea that a Jewish state in Palestine, which would link Asia with Europe, would also fructify European culture. In 1848, an eminent French writer, Ernest Laharanne,

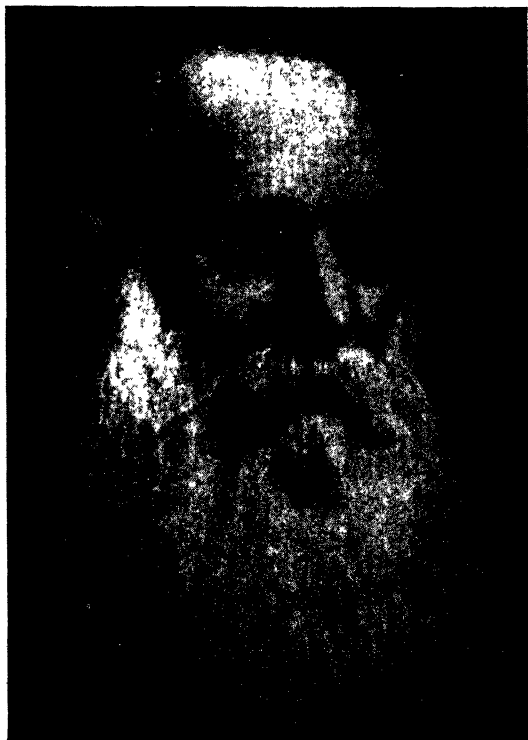


endorsed the idea of the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine with the help of Jewish capital, and the support of the European governments. Before the Berlin Congress of 1878, a brochure, bearing the title *New Light on the Eastern Question* and written by a British diplomat, stated that when the rulers of Europe gathered to solve the critical problems in Turkey, they should agree that no one European Power possess Palestine, but that the country be under the combined protection of all the Powers, without being subject to any—making that community the commercial liaison between Asia and Europe. The examination of this subject points directly to a people scattered over the face of the earth, who in justice ought to occupy such a position, and are practically more fitted than any other to do so. Another warm advocate of Jewish colonization in Palestine was Laurence Oliphant, a British diplomat. His book, *The Land of Gilead*, published after a visit to Palestine in 1879, made a deep impression. A novel published a few years earlier, George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, elaborated the ideal of a Jewish national revival in the ancient homeland.

These ideas gradually began to penetrate Jewish circles. The first articulate voices raised were those of two orthodox rabbis, Zevi Hirsch Kalischer and Judah Alkalai. While Kalischer's thesis had a strong religious coloring, Alkalai showed a broader political vision. The idea was clearly formulated, both in its ideological and political phases, by the socialist thinker, Moses Hess, in his *Rome and Jerusalem* (1862), in which he took a definite stand against assimilation. Change as you may your names, habits, manners, clothes and opinions, he declared, nonetheless, the outside world will not let you hide your origin. You will be known as Jews to all. You will remain Jews because the Jewish people is not a religious community but a separate nation. . . . The Jewish nation is the bearer of a great and exalted mission in the world, he went on, and must consolidate itself on the

foundations of a real national life. That is possible only in Palestine, on the soil of the fatherland. The present political situation makes it feasible to found a Jewish state in Palestine; the practical work must begin with the settlement of Jewish farm-workers there. The nucleus of the Jewish state will be not the Jews of the West, but the Eastern Jews.

In Western Europe, where the assimilationist trends prevailed, these ideas found little response. But in Eastern Europe, already in the early seventies, a vigorous fight for national revival and against assimilation had begun in the ranks of the Haskalah movement itself. The fight was waged simultaneously on two fronts: on the one hand, in favor of enlightenment, knowledge and education as against "darkness," religious fanaticism and Hasidism; and on the other hand, for a modern and dignified national life, free from the spiritual bondage and ideological emptiness of assimilationism. This was the cause for which Peretz Smolenskin fought passionately in his monthly journal, *Ha-Shahar*, which gathered about it the best literary talents of the time and had a tremendous effect upon those sections of Jewish youth who had received a traditional training but had been caught in the toils of the Haskalah movement. Subsequently, these groups constituted the mainstay of the Hibbat Zion movement. The ideology which Smolenskin so warmly defended, was, it is true, rather diffuse. Its essential basis was to be the Hebrew language and the development of a literature in Hebrew, while the idea of a general national renaissance was discussed only in abstract terms. Indeed, in 1879, when A. Perelman (Eliezer ben Yehudah) wrote an article advocating the ideal of a national rebirth in Palestine, Smolenskin took issue with him. "The Jews," he contended, "are not like other peoples. The life of all other nations is bound up with the existence of their state, but the Jews have a spiritual realm. . . . The source of our life-giving waters is not our land but our Torah, which has accom-



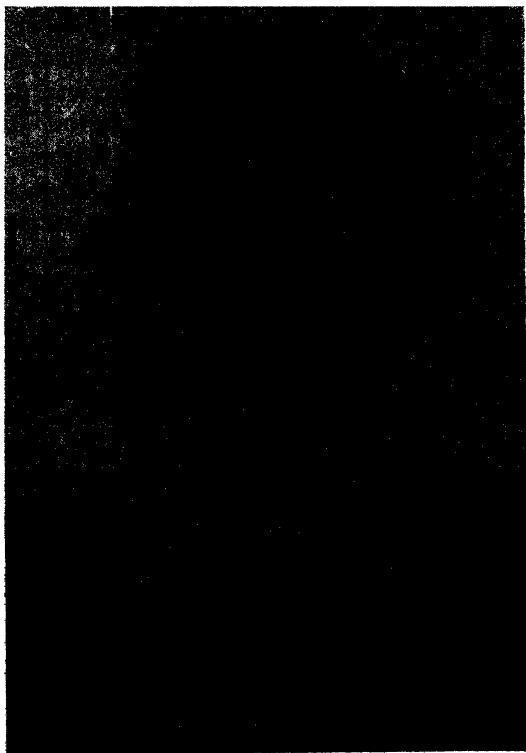
M. L. LILIENBLUM (1843-1910)

panied us for thousands of years. . . . He who wishes to rebuild the ruins of Zion in Jerusalem, is like a man who wishes to erect a tower on a roof-top before he has built his house." The pogroms of 1881, however, gave the final impetus: Smolenskin and the outstanding protagonist of the Haskalah, M. L. Lilienblum, besides many others, joined the ranks of the Hibbat Zion movement of which the Bilu groups became the pioneers.

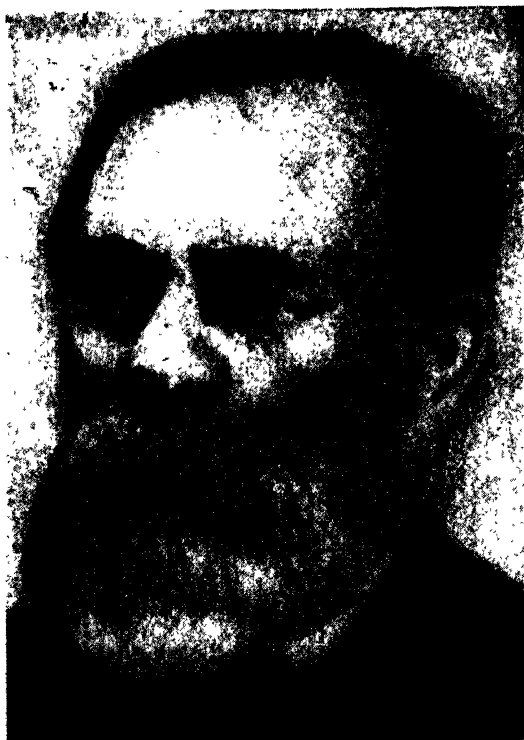
Bilu, a name composed of the initial letters of the Hebrew verse "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us go" (Isaiah II, 5), had a membership of about 500. Only a small fraction of this number settled in Palestine, and the group that remained there was smaller still. Nor did Bilu strictly adhere to its original program. At the outset, the collectivist tendency prevailed. "First of all," a letter circulated by the Kiev Bilu group announced, "you must not bring into Palestine the curse of the old civilization—the land problem. That problem is one of the most terrible,

and if we bring it into the fatherland, if we plant the decayed roots of the old world there, we will simply be committing suicide. This is especially important for the first colonies, for they must be models for those that will be established later. Do not forget that the revival must be not only a national, but also an economic one. Our age has placed the economic tasks in the forefront." Though their collectivist tendencies were dissipated soon enough, these groups nevertheless played a significant role in the settlement of Palestine and in the Hibbat Zion movement, a role out of all proportion to their numbers or the weight of their achievements. They demonstrated the rare strength of pioneering idealists, endowed with a zealous obstinacy and a power of endurance, embodying their ideals in their personal lives.

A decisive influence in the formation of the ideology of Hibbat Zion was now furnished by Dr. Leon Pinsker in his brochure *Auto-Emancipation*, issued first in German



RABBI SAMUEL MOHILEVER (1824-1898)



LEON PINSKER (1821-1891)

(1882), but soon after translated into Hebrew and Russian. The complete re-orientation of a section of the intellectual element, as a result of the pogroms and the ever-mounting anti-Semitism, found in Pinsker's brochure its most vigorous expression. Previously an ardent protagonist of assimilation, Pinsker was now transformed into a resolute champion of national rebirth of the Jewish people in a land of its own. He categorically affirmed that the Jews were but an alien body everywhere and that, "merging with no national group, they were tolerated by none." Only one solution remained: auto-emancipation, i.e., the consolidation of the Jewish people in its own territory, whether in Palestine or in another country did not concern him at first. Subsequently, under the influence of the colonizing work which had begun in Palestine, he joined those national forces which were deeply rooted in the Jewish past, and for whom the revival of the Jewish people outside of Palestine was altogether unthinkable.

For the Lovers of Zion (Hovevei Zion) the return to the ancient fatherland naturally implied also a return to the old culture, and particularly to the Hebrew language. The revival of Hebrew thus became a cornerstone of the Hibbat Zion movement, especially for the new community to be established in Palestine. In this respect, the Lovers of Zion went hand in hand with the Lovers of the Hebrew Language (Hovevei Sfat Ever). Again the remarkable vigor of a founding group was demonstrated when, armed with an ideal and power of endurance, it started to embody its will in concrete deeds. Eliezer ben Yehudah, who made the revival of Hebrew the task of his life, now settled in Palestine and applied himself with devotion to the realization of his ideal in his own home and in his immediate environment. Teachers and cultural leaders followed him, all imbued with the same zeal and resolution, and together they laid the foundation upon which some decades later was erected the great edifice of Hebrew life and culture in Palestine.

No idealism and zeal, whether of single individuals or of groups, however, could bridge the gap between aspiration and realization. The Hibbat Zion movement had evolved as an effort for the radical reconstruction of the whole of Jewish life; its goal was the liberation of the Jews from the Diaspora and their establishment in the land of their fathers. Jewish life, however, flowed in an altogether different direction. The great Jewish mass emigration which streamed out of Eastern Europe, especially from Russia, in the eighties, moved not toward Palestine—into which only insignificant numbers filtered through—but to America, the land of liberty and of unlimited economic opportunities.

Formidable obstacles beset the colonization work in Palestine from the very beginning. The first hindrance was of a political nature; opposition from the Turkish government which was striving in vain to check the disintegration of its empire, and which regarded Jewish settlement in Pales-

tine with alarm. Then came the economic hardships, inherent in any new settlement, especially in a poor and desolate land. The colonization effort of the Hibbat Zion movement was consequently on a small scale and hence a semi-philanthropic affair. Besides, by its very composition, as well as by the character of its proponents, the movement was doomed to a narrow sectarianism, and thus lacked a large social scope. Its core consisted of middle-class elements with a limited social and cultural vision. Between it and the broad masses of the people there was ever a rift, a social and cultural estrangement. The social struggle and cultural problems of the masses were alien to the *Maskilim*, whose cultural medium was the "aristocratic" Hebrew, while the folk-speech, Yiddish, appeared to them the very badge of ignorance and a heritage of Diaspora life. This internal social and cultural situation, added to the external political and economic factors, explains why the life of the masses of the people was bound to sidepass the Hibbat Zion movement.

### 3. AHAD HAAM

To clarify the problems confronting Hibbat Zion in ideological terms; to overcome the sharp contradiction existing between its great original vision and its modest achievements and opportunities; to infuse the very acceptance of practical possibilities with an idealistic spirit—such was the task undertaken by Ahad Haam, the profoundest thinker and most talented writer produced by the movement. Ahad Haam was convinced that the vast majority of Jews could not conceivably be concentrated in Palestine, that the Diaspora could not be liquidated. "We must admit," he wrote, "that the ingathering of the exiles is beyond the realm of possibility. It is possible that eventually we may found a Jewish state, that Jews will multiply and wax stronger there until the whole land is full of them; yet even then the majority of the Jewish people will still remain scattered and dispersed in alien places, and it



AHAD HAAM (1856-1927)

will be impossible to bring together our harassed brethren from the four corners of the earth. Such a consummation only religion through its miracles can promise us." In general "even in the distant, dreamed-of future, the *galut* in its material aspects will not stir from its present haunts;" the majority of Jews will forever remain in the lands of their dispersion. However, he firmly defended his view that the fate of Judaism, not the Jewish question, was the most important problem. The task was to create favorable conditions for the maintenance and development of a national culture, which should embody the genuine national spirit, the spirit of Judaism. This was the supreme meaning and goal of national life, the one for which the people had always fought, and for the sake of which it had endured centuries of martyrdom. For Ahad Haam it was axiomatic, first, that the true spirit of Judaism could

develop normally only on Palestine's historic soil, where the national "ego" was originally formed and crystallized; secondly, that this spiritual regeneration was possible only in the Hebrew language, which embodies the cultural uniqueness of the people, which has absorbed the national heritage, and is itself the main depository of the Jewish creative genius.

If, however, the chief issue is not the Jewish problem, not the redemption from the Diaspora, not the abolition of the specific situation in which Jewry lives, as Pinsker and others originally posed the problem; if it is rather the problem of Judaism that must occupy the central position, or more precisely, Ahad Haam's special interpretation of that problem, then no exodus from the Diaspora is necessary. It would be sufficient to create a spiritual center in Palestine. "The whole objective of this work," wrote Ahad Haam, "is simply this: to gather in Palestine a certain section of the people; in the course of time, as this group attains a normal and independent life, it will become the center of our common national life and its spirit will influence all the other groups which will remain in foreign lands, will cleanse them all of the filth of their inner bondage, and will weld them into a single national body with an integrated spirit."

Thus Ahad Haam excluded from the scope of the Hibbat Zion movement any concern with Diaspora life even in its cultural aspects, and left only the cultivation of Judaism by means of a center to be created in Palestine. This self-limitation of purpose at first assumed a rather sectarian character, which found its expression in the founding of a secret order, Bne Mosheh (Sons of Moses), a kind of Masonic lodge of chosen spirits, who were imbued with the idea and were ready to consecrate themselves to its realization.

#### 4. WIDER PERSPECTIVES

The Diaspora life, however, revolted and, disregarding the impact of Ahad Haam's philosophy upon Hibbat Zion,

gradually dissipated this sectarian outlook. The last two decades of the nineteenth century were years of increasing political ferment in Jewish life. Despite the fact that the reigns of Alexander III and Nicholas II were periods of aggravated reaction, the process of capitalist development was now penetrating ever more deeply into the backward economy of Russia, and was producing an urban proletariat and groups of professionals and intellectuals charged with dynamic energies. New and powerful forces entered into the social-political struggle which culminated in the great revolutionary outbreak at the beginning of the present century. In Jewish life, too, in this large and nationally fecund center of the people, new social forces, such as the Jewish labor movement, came into being. In general, this period favored every organization that had an organic relationship with Jewish life in the countries where Jews lived, that categorically rejected all separatist tendencies and was not oriented toward a national homeland. These new social currents, which sprang from the classes hitherto socially unresponsive, and which carried with them the impetus of the struggle for the everyday interests of the Jewish masses as well as the promise of social and national liberation in the Diaspora, necessarily brought a new spirit into the ranks of the Hibbat Zion movement, awakening it to the need of wider horizons and a larger vision.

Other factors also stimulated this reorientation. Increased persecution and new repressive measures, especially the expulsion of Jews from Moscow in 1891, again gave impetus to the emigration tide, and created an atmosphere similar to that of 1881. Baron Hirsch's colonization project, which aimed to settle millions of Russian Jews in Argentina, revived the dream of liberation. The dream did not last long. It was proved soon enough that colonization on so large a scale within a short period of time was not within the power of a philanthropic society, even when provided with a substantial capital. The Jew-

ish Colonization Association (JCA) which controlled Baron Hirsch's bequest and administered the work of colonization was, moreover, thoroughly unsympathetic to the ideal of a Jewish national rebirth. In accordance with its views colonization work from the very beginning proceeded along the following lines: no concentration of compact Jewish masses that might lead to the creation of an autonomous Jewish settlement, but scattered groups, isolated Jewish colonies spread over the huge expanse of the land. And so the dream of redemption was soon extinguished. Jewish mass emigration proceeded on its beaten path, not back to the soil but to the city, and directed itself especially to the United States. However, the main body of both the actual and potential emigrants carried so great an abundance of national vitality and creative capacity that it continually activated the Hibbat Zion movement. Thus there accumulated among the active groups of the Hibbat Zion, and in the periphery, reservoirs of national energy which insistently sought an outlet.

### III. ZIONISM

#### 1. THE RISE OF ZIONISM

The decisive impulse which carried the Hibbat Zion movement out into the broader historical arena came from Western Europe. It had become evident that emancipated Jewry could not redeem the pledge requiring the total assimilation of the Jewish masses even in the West. In conformity with the principles of emancipation, the Jews had indeed succeeded in penetrating deeply into the life about them, had assumed responsible positions in the capitalist world, and had emerged in the foremost ranks of the liberal professions as well as in political and cultural life. Despite all their efforts, however, they were unable to merge so completely with the non-Jewish population as to lose their national character. No matter how they disguised their group identity they remained in the final analysis a well-defined minority,

distinct from their environment. Thus the emancipation did not improve their position so far as the age-old Jew-hatred was concerned. On the contrary, the more responsible the position of the Jews became in the life of the country, the greater the envy and hatred of those non-Jewish middle-class and intellectual elements which felt Jewish competition most keenly. In the last decades of the nineteenth century the anti-Semitic movement burst into full bloom in Western Europe, not only in the classic lands of Jew-hatred, Germany and Austria-Hungary, but even in France, the scene of the famous Affaire Dreyfus, which shocked the world.

This resurgence had a profound effect upon some assimilationist circles in Western Europe and led them to a "reappraisal of values," as had happened in Russia after the pogroms of 1881. It made the strongest impression on Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), whose entire spirit was convulsed by this experience and whose future destiny was decided by it. In 1895 he wrote his book, *Der Judenstaat*, and independently of Pinsker and Hess, of whose works he had no knowledge at the time, came to the same conclusion: that assimilation could not solve the Jewish problem and that in general "there is for the Jews no other way out, no salvation but to return to their own nation and to settle in a land of their own." Like Pinsker, Herzl did not at first designate Palestine as the Jewish land, but unlike the former, he was not content with a mere theoretic formulation of his new national credo. Herzl developed a concrete plan for realizing his idea. With the sanction of the great Powers, Jews were to receive "sovereignty over a portion of the globe large enough to satisfy the rightful requirements of a nation." The Jews would have to organize the migration to this territory and establish a system of self-government in the spirit of equality and freedom. For this purpose he proposed to organize a "Society of Jews" and a "Jewish Company." The Society would conduct negotiations with governments for the acquisition of a



THEODOR HERZL (1860-1904)

territory and would also frame the constitution of the Jewish state. The Company would be in charge of migration, colonization and economic organization of the territory, in accordance with the precise socio-economic and financial plan which Herzl had devised.

For Herzl *Der Judenstaat* was no mere literary essay, but a life-program to the realization of which he was ready to consecrate his entire being. He was eminently fitted for the role he now assumed. He had sweep, creative initiative and extraordinary organizing abilities. He was, moreover, endowed with rare charm and power of persuasion; in a word, the born creator and leader of a national movement.

His first great step was the calling of a Jewish Congress for the purpose of solemnly proclaiming to the world the idea of the nation's rebirth in a land of its own. This Congress was to become the representative body of the movement and to be charged with the task of implementing the idea. Herzl also took up his plan with

Jewish financiers, beginning with Baron Hirsch, and devoted himself to making diplomatic contacts to further his aims. This daring ambition, the creation of a Jewish state, a revolutionary enterprise to solve once and for all the grievous Jewish problem, attracted wide attention. It gained enthusiastic adherents among both the national-minded circles and disillusioned assimilationists. Certain bourgeois elements and deeply assimilated intellectuals, on the other hand, were stricken with a kind of panic and showed extreme antagonism.

Herzl's proposals were greeted with special enthusiasm in the ranks of the Lovers of Zion, and gave the Hibbat Zion movement new impetus. Men's spirits were exhilarated by great hopes; splendid perspectives stretched ahead. It was altogether natural that these groups should serve as the chief supporters of the newborn movement, and under their pressure Herzl was persuaded that the Jewish state he envisioned should be established in Zion, in Palestine. Thus the movement got its name, Zionism.

## 2. THE BASEL PROGRAM

The first Zionist Congress met at the end of August 1897 in Basel, Switzerland, with two hundred delegates from various countries. The participants regarded the Congress as a kind of Jewish World Parliament or as a Constituent National Assembly. A feeling of exaltation reigned among them, characteristic of a great historic occasion in a nation's life. In his opening speech, Herzl outlined the general character of the Zionist movement as an effort "to return to Judaism even prior to the return to a Jewish state." He vigorously opposed settling Palestine by the slow method of establishing small colonies there and "sneaking" into the land, and he clearly formulated his objective: the legal mass colonization of Jews on the basis of a definite political agreement with the Turkish government founded on mutual interests.

A tremendous impression was made by the speech of Max Nordau (1849-1923),

who was second only to Herzl among the personalities gathered at Basel. Nordau was one of the first adherents of Herzl. In his address "On the General Situation of Jewry," he made a keen diagnosis of the unique physical and spiritual malady afflicting the people and indicated the causes of the disease. In Eastern Europe, he said, the Jewish tragedy was characterized by a bitter struggle to establish some basis for material survival under severe political repression and denial of civil rights. In Western Europe the problem was moral in character. The emancipation of Jewry proclaimed by the Western European countries was not the expression of an internal urge but only the logical corollary of eighteenth-century French rationalism. The civilized Christian nations, he said, had basically not freed themselves from their hereditary feelings with regard to the Jews. The emancipated Jew, in the meantime, had approached Christian society with an unreserved eagerness to integrate with it; he had destroyed behind him the fortifications in which he could hide himself from an alien hostile environment. But, Nordau declared "... his countrymen repel him when he wishes to associate with them. He has no ground under his feet... timid with strangers, suspicious even toward the secret feelings of his friends. His best powers are exhausted in the suppression or at least the difficult concealment, of his own real character. For he fears that this character might be recognized as Jewish, and he has never the satisfaction of showing himself as he is in all his thoughts and sentiments. He becomes an inner cripple and externally unreal, and thereby always ridiculous and hateful to all men of higher feeling, as is everything that is unreal." The new "Marranos" suffer more than the old did, Nordau emphasized. "The latter had an idealistic direction—a secret desire for truth or a heart-breaking distress of conscience, and they often sought for pardon and purification through martyrdom," Nordau concluded that the sole cure

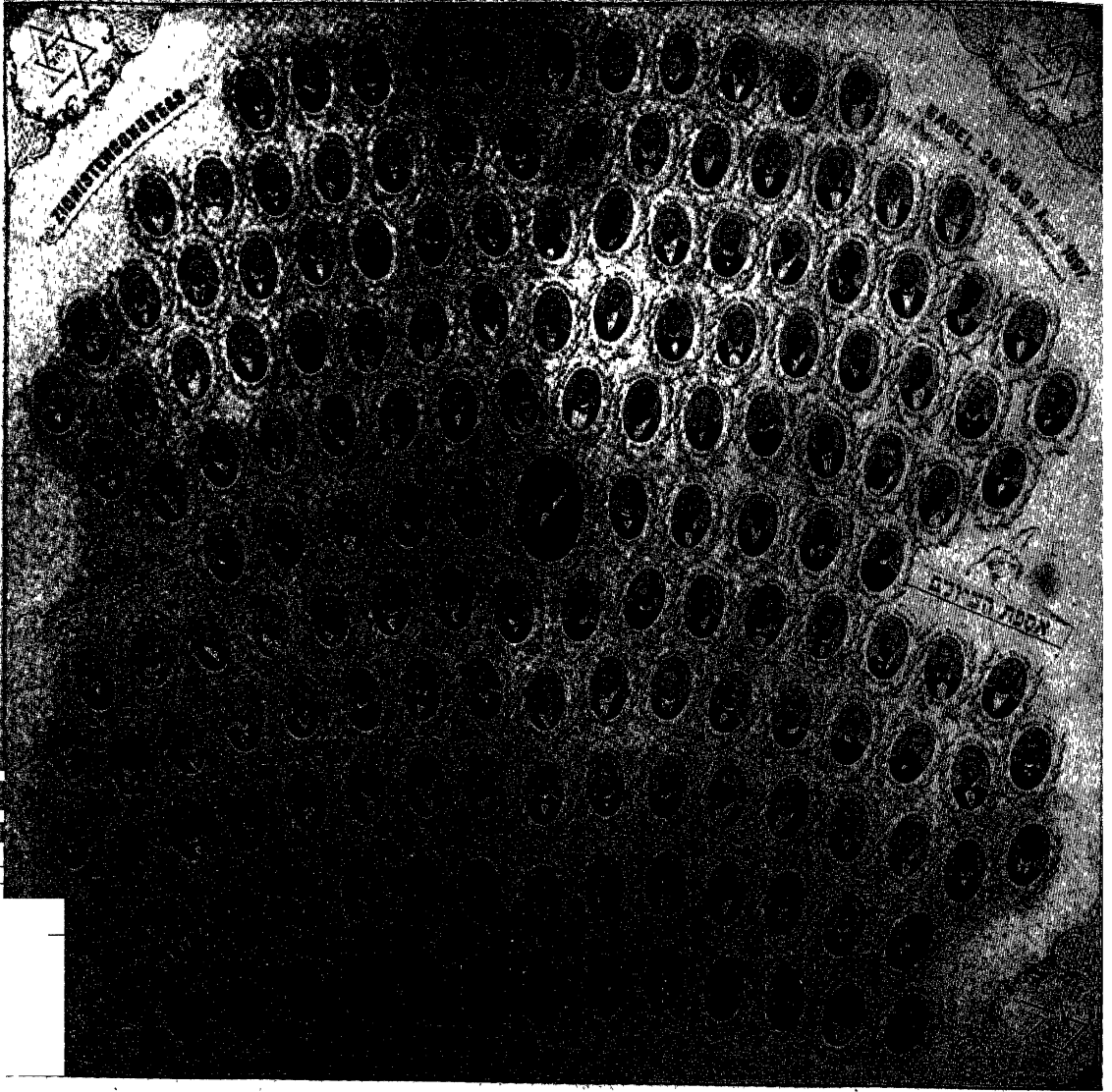


MAX NORDAU (1849-1923)

for the material and spiritual malady of Jewry was Zionism.

After the diagnosis of the malady and the general remedial principle had been firmly established, the Congress turned towards the consideration of a cure. After long debate the following program was adopted: "Zionism strives to create for the Jewish people a publicly recognized, legally secured home in Palestine. To achieve this goal, the Congress envisages the following measures: 1) by fostering the settlement of Palestine with farmers, laborers and artisans; 2) by organizing the whole of Jewry in suitable local and general bodies, in accordance with the laws of their respective countries; 3) by strengthening the national Jewish feeling and national consciousness; 4) by taking preparatory steps to attain any governmental consent which may be necessary to reach the aim of Zionism." The foundations of the Zionist Organization were established next: the highest authority was to be the Congress which would be called into session regularly and which would elect an Actions Committee. The executive committee, headed by Dr. Herzl, was given the task of bringing into exist-





Courtesy Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO), New York  
FIRST ZIONIST CONGRESS, BASEL, AUGUST 29-31, 1897

ence, prior to the next session of the Congress, the financial instruments of the Zionist Organization, the Colonial Bank and the National Fund.

In this way the great public Zionist tribune came into being, and as such it has functioned ever since. Thus were laid the foundations of the Zionist movement which has played a leading role in Jewish life for the last half-century. From its inception Zionism strove to become a national movement which would embrace all

classes and elements within Jewry. Its great sweep, its daring ambition to achieve the "ingathering of the exiles," and its urge to solve not only the problem of Judaism, but more especially the general Jewish problem reflected in the abnormal social, economic and cultural conditions of millions of Jews the world over—all this enabled Herzlian political Zionism to capture the imagination of the diverse groups of the Jewish population, from the deeply orthodox to the leftist radical group, the middle class as



GROUP OF DELEGATES TO THE FIRST ZIONIST CONGRESS, PARTICIPATING IN THE TENTH ZIONIST CONGRESS, BASEL, 1911

1. G. BIELKOWSKY, 2. M. USSISCHKIN, 3. DAVID WOLFSOHN, 4. H. FARBSTEIN, 5. MAX NORDAU, 6. M. J. BODENHEIMER, 7. NAHUM SOKOLOW, 8. I. L. GOLDBERG, 9. D. TRIETSCH, 10. L. JAFFE, 11. A. STAND, 12. A. SALZ, 13. A. HAUSMANN, 14. GOITEIN, 15. HEINRICH LOEWE, 16. LEON HORODICHZ, 17. B. GINSBERG.

well as the working classes. In view of the heterogeneity of these groups it was only natural that a process of differentiation should soon set in and that various currents and trends should gradually become manifest.

### 3. DEVELOPMENT OF FACTIONS

Zionism was soon confronted by immense difficulties which made it evident that the complex social realities could not easily adapt or fit into the neat framework of Herzl's rationalist design. For Herzl, Zionism was the program of an enterprise, grandiose in scope, social and national in character, but, nonetheless, an enterprise, the realization of which was wholly dependent on the will. Let us, then, go for-

ward, and spare no effort until we achieve our end. His famous aphorism, "if you wish it, it is no dream," expresses the essence of his Zionist idea. A conception so purely voluntaristic and devoid of the proper sociological basis could not go unchallenged. It gradually became clear, that the resettlement of a people numbering many millions would be no easy task. This people had been wrenched from its soil two thousand years before; now widely scattered, its parts had been woven into the very texture of the economic, social and cultural life of the environment. To weld its several parts together, to transport it back to its ancient homeland, long neglected and now ruined, and to transform its whole structure—this implied a thor-

oughgoing revolution in all aspects of Jewish life. It was not to be imagined that such a revolution could be prepared and brought about merely as a mechanical, organizational enterprise, or one which could be converted into a living reality merely by good intentions. It had to be considered rather as a historic process extending over generations, during which the extensive material, spiritual and organizational forces of the people could increase gradually and accumulate so that the essential external and internal conditions might become ripe for realization. What this implied became evident soon enough.

Notwithstanding the remarkable energy which Herzl and his co-workers displayed in winning over Jewish financial circles and in the negotiations with ministers of state and particularly with the Turkish government, there were no tangible results, and an impasse was reached. On the one hand, most of the Jewish middle class and the intelligentsia would not budge; despite the growth of anti-Semitism there were still ample prospects for them in the Diaspora, and they were unwilling to abandon these prospects for the narrow limitations of the promised homeland. The awakening of national dreams would check the trend toward assimilation which was their heart's desire; it would, indeed, supply ammunition to those who maintained that Jews were aliens everywhere. Nor were the Jewish masses more amenable. True, they were being driven out of Eastern Europe by political oppression and material distress, but they still had the spacious lands across the sea available to them. There the hope of improving their economic lot and the prospect of a decent life in a democratic society beckoned to them. Though they were deeply rooted in national life, Zionism did not meet their primary interests; it could do no more than arouse some romantic feeling among them; but this was too feeble to become an active social factor in their lives.

Nor were the international political forces of the outside world ripe enough to

undertake seriously the realization of the Zionist plans. The Jewish problem had not yet become a world problem. The anti-Semitic movement had not yet exhibited the symptoms of that dangerous malady which has since afflicted humanity with such fatal results. There still prevailed, especially in progressive and radical circles, the theory inherited from the emancipation era, that the Jews were not a nation, but only a religious community. From that standpoint-Zionism seemed a bizarre and exotic ideal.

Soon a mood of dissatisfaction was rife in the movement. It lacked the vital activities that could relate it to concrete reality, to daily life and struggle. In contradistinction to the Hibbat Zion movement, Zionism, which included a large variety of groups, could not disregard the torrents of revolt that flowed in the social and political life of Russia at this time. The question of an immediate program thus presented itself, one that could link up the distant Zionist dawn in Palestine with the pulsating life in the Diaspora, the ideal of the future with current reality. It was in the consideration of such a program, and in response to the concrete requirements and interests of Diaspora life, that the various trends in Zionism first came into being.

To consider the Orthodox Mizrahi party first, it should be noted that from the very start, even while they were part of the Hibbat Zion movement, the Orthodox groups always emphasized their religious conservatism and invariably tried to impose their imprint upon the movement. Their position was, indeed, a peculiar and difficult one. First of all, they had to wage a hard fight in their own ranks of traditional Judaism, where there was spirited opposition to Zionism. According to the religious tradition, the redemption would be brought about by the Messiah himself and it was forbidden to "hasten the end." The Mizrahi found it no easy task, therefore, to promote Zionism as a legitimate cause. It was also very difficult for them to work together with freethinkers and

heretics. At any rate, they had to stand constantly on guard to counteract the dangerous influences of these unorthodox elements in the Zionist movement. The controversy flared up early in the Zionist congresses. It was, of course, natural for Zionism seeking "a return to Judaism" to be also preoccupied with the development of a national ideology, and to include in its program work of a cultural character. It was precisely in this sphere of culture more than anywhere else, however, that the orthodox and freethinking elements were at loggerheads. Accordingly, the Mizrahi demanded that such controversial issues be excluded from the general Zionist program.

This attitude was supported by that section of the so-called General Zionists who, far removed from Judaism and Jewish life, nevertheless had joined the movement not from motives of national feeling, but in an effort to escape from the external pressure of anti-Semitism. These included, first of all, the Western Zionists, with Herzl and Nordau in the lead; they were joined by a portion of the middle-class and assimilated elements of the Eastern group, who fell under the spell of these imposing leaders. For all of these, the purely political aim of Zionism in its original Herzlian form was still both the core and the goal of the movement. The notion of an immediate program ministering to the needs of Diaspora life, and particularly the idea of cultural work in the national spirit, was quite alien to them. It was also objectionable to them as a threat to the unity of the movement.

In opposition to this dominant tendency stood that Eastern faction in whom the spirit of Hibbat Zion and the philosophy of Ahad Haam were deeply implanted. For this group, the essence of Zionism was to be found only in the spirit of Judaism and its cultivation. The problem of national culture was, therefore, foremost in all their deliberations. The extreme views of this faction were energetically defended by Ahad Haam himself. Beginning with the sessions of the first Congress where, as he

himself expressed it, he felt "like a mourner at the feast," he employed his vigorous and biting oratory to blast the program, ideology and the tactics of political Zionism.

There was also a degree of sympathy with this trend within the so-called "democratic faction," formed at the first Congress under the leadership of Leo Motzkin, Chaim Weizmann and others. It included in the main the more alert and radical-minded student youth elements. For them, Herzl's political Zionism was too narrow and superficial, and his methods not democratic enough. They strove to deepen the movement, to fortify it by providing it with a more solid theoretical foundation; they wished to give it more of an integral character, so that it might embrace within itself the manifold aspects of modern Jewish life. Immediate work in the Diaspora, especially on the cultural plane, accordingly deserved an appropriate place in the program. The "democratic faction," on the whole, was of a rather nebulous character, fading after the first few Congresses and finally merging with the more radical wing of the General Zionists.

#### IV. SOCIALIST CURRENTS IN ZIONISM; TERRITORIALISM

##### 1. ORIGINS

The socialist elements and the labor groups were bound to secede from the Zionist Organization. The problem of an immediate program was a central issue for the left wing, but a relatively unimportant issue for other Zionist groups. The former were under the spell of the revolutionary atmosphere which pervaded Russia. The Bund had stirred up the whole Jewish working class and was constantly urging it to join the revolutionary struggle (See *The Jewish Socialist Movement* in this volume). For the socialist and labor groups in the Zionist ranks, it was impossible to avoid those questions which regularly came to the surface in the Jewish labor movement. This daily struggle brought to the fore the special orientation of these groups and re-

sulted in the formation of separate labor Zionist organizations.

The situation of those labor groups which, under the leadership of the socialist intelligentsia, had organized under the general name of Poale Zion, was quite complicated. They faced a tangled web of theoretical problems and practical tasks. They had to find a synthesis of Zionism and Socialism, of the national and social problem, of class struggle and national unity. They had to devise a bridge between their present struggle in the Diaspora and their ideal of a future in their own land. All this complex of problems and tasks they had to unravel by their own effort, for they had no forerunners to guide them. It was under such unfavorable conditions that the first Poale Zionist tendencies appeared about 1901. By 1902-1903 some fairly large organizations had already developed, and had spread chiefly throughout Lithuania, Southern Russia and Poland. Most of these led an isolated existence, and had no ties with one another.

Owing to the immaturity of their program, and to the lack of able leadership, they at first presented a confused picture. The various groups had basic differences of opinion on the most important questions of program and tactics. However, all the main trends were able to unite on a basic view of their ultimate social and national goal. Practically all of them accepted Marxian Socialism as the solution of the social problem, and the revival of the Jewish people in its own land as the only solution of the Jewish problem. They were also of one mind in their negative attitude toward the *galut*: in the Diaspora, they felt, the Jews were fated to sink lower and lower, both materially and spiritually. The left-wing groups were also agreed that it would be impossible for the Jewish masses to proletarianize themselves in the Diaspora, i.e., to turn to productive work there. According to their theory, the Jewish people, almost exclusively urban and consisting largely of petty bourgeoisie and *Luftmenshen* would, with the further de-

velopment of capitalism, be compelled to proletarianize themselves. At the same time the factory doors would remain shut against them because of the competition of the village population, now becoming urbanized, and better adjusted to do factory work. The Jewish masses in Eastern Europe were, therefore, forced to leave their homes and emigrate mostly to America. Yet even in the New World they could not enter the more important industries, they were compelled to enter the lowest ranks in the industrial scale, where the severest form of sweat-shop exploitation prevailed. This being the case, there was but one way out—to stop picking up crumbs from other people's tables and to build their own economy in their own land.

Such were the basic elements working for unity within the Poale Zion movement. Significant differences of opinion developed, however, on two important questions. These involved, first, their attitude toward the political struggle; secondly, the choice between Territorialism and Palestine. The political problem was the burning question of the day; the rumblings of the revolutionary volcano, which erupted a few years later, were already clearly audible. Following the Kishinev massacre in the spring of 1903, the Jewish population's fury pressed for action. In this atmosphere, all Jewish labor organizations had to give the problem of political struggle a central position in their program. The issue of Territorialism was, likewise, thrust into the limelight when at the sixth Zionist Congress the famous Uganda project was suddenly hurled into the discussion. Whereas the General Zionists masked the question of Uganda under the guise of a temporary abode, in labor circles, it was regarded as a question of principle and called forth a passionate ideological conflict.

A complete negative attitude toward the political struggle was adopted by the so-called "Minsk Trend." The Poale Zion organization of Minsk as early as 1902, had succeeded in establishing itself as the central link of a chain of organizations func-

tioning in White Russia and Lithuania. In their pessimistic outlook on the *galut*, they thought that political freedom and the achievement of a democratic state would yield the Jewish masses no special gains. Why, then, squander so much strength in this struggle; why offer up so many sacrifices? They felt, moreover, that Jewish revolutionary activity could be only of small account, and that reactionary elements were using it as a pretext for compromising the movement as a whole. Only in its own land, where the Jewish proletariat would lead a normal life under conditions of natural development, could it carry on a productive class struggle and strive for the realization of socialism. This, however, need not preclude waging an economic struggle through strikes and the like, to improve the material conditions of the worker as much as possible. It should have no concern with politics, however, nor should it be directed against the government. On the contrary, the economic fight would have a better chance of success if it avoided political complications. In this respect, the Minsk faction of the Poale Zionists was quite close to the views of the then well-known Independent Party, the so-called "Legalists" or "Zubatovists." (See *Jewish Socialist Movement in Russia and Poland* in this volume.)

The Poale Zionists in South Russia, with those of Ekaterinoslav in the lead, disagreed with the position of the Minsk group. In South Russia the Poale Zionists had a more favorable soil for their development than in Lithuania and Poland. The Bund was just beginning its work in the South and had not yet established its hegemony over the ranks of Jewish labor. Intensive work by the Russian Social Democrats had met with much initial success, since the Jewish masses of that region were much more under the influence of Russian culture than were the Jews of Lithuania and Poland. Still, a socialist organization which stressed the painful Jewish national question was sure to have a marked drawing power and could attract all those fresh and vigorous revolu-

tionary forces which in Lithuania and Poland had already been captured by the Bund. It was not necessary for these groups to justify their active participation in the fight for political liberation in terms of logic or on the basis of any sociological theory; they were stimulated to action rather by a direct, revolutionary instinct. Their very senses told them how utterly unnatural and impossible it would be to remain on the side-lines while the fate of a great country was being decided, a country which was, besides, the home of a Jewish population of six million souls, crushed under the rule of a despotic regime; and thus it was that they hurled themselves with full force into the struggle. Between these two extreme attitudes on the question of participation in the political struggle, there were also a number of compromise positions inclining to one side or the other.

There was an exchange of roles, however, on the Territorialist issue. The Minsk group was solidly in favor of the Territorialist viewpoint, then considered in Poale Zionist circles as proof of greater radicalism. Contrariwise, the more radical organizations in the South supported Palestine first in opposition to Uganda or any other likely territory. They, too, took as their starting point the uncompromising principle of a separate territory. Both factions were concerned less with Judaism or the Jewish spiritual problem than with the necessity of creating a territorial basis for a free and normal life for the Jewish masses, irrespective of geography. The Southern faction contended, however, that only in Palestine would it be possible to realize the ideal of Territorialism. True, their arguments were quite nebulous, and here, too, as in the case of the political question, they displayed more feeling than logic. Actually, the national awakening was accompanied by a more intense "romanticism" among these "Russified" masses of the South than among the "Lithuanians," who were steeped in Judaism.

In time the dissension within the ranks of the Poale Zion became quite intolerable,

and a strong need arose for an exchange of views so that a common platform might be worked out and a single organization created. Among the various attempts made toward this objective, the most important was the so-called Vozrozhdeniya Conference, held in Kiev in the autumn of 1903. At this conference were laid the ideological foundations of the two trends in the Zionist labor movement which eventually split into two distinct parties, the Zionist Socialist Workers' Party and the Jewish Socialist Workers' Party.

## 2. THE ZIONIST SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY

At the Kiev Conference the Zionist Socialist position was represented by delegates who supported Territorialism and the principle of participation in the political struggle. The delegates of Herut (Freedom), the Zionist Socialist society which Nachman Syrkin had founded several years before among the student youth, endorsed this position. The ideology of the group followed the Marxist conception of Socialist Zionism or Territorialism. In the report of the conference, published in 1904, Z. W. Latzki-Bertoldi, then a devoted disciple of Syrkin, formulated this viewpoint as follows:

It is easy to foresee the course of Jewish economic development in Russia by analogy with the completed development of Jewry in Western Europe, and with the similar evolution in the ghettos of London and America. There may be a difference in degree but not in kind. With the acquisition of equal rights by Jews, the bourgeois professions, beginning with the financial and ending with the intellectual, will constitute for Jews, as urban dwellers, the line of least resistance. Jews will not be able to compete in manual labor; whereas they will be needed in intellectual vocations . . . The Jewish people will provide favorable conditions for the emergence of a socialist intelligentsia, but not for the creation of a Jewish socialist party. The reason is that we

lack the economic basis either for the development of socialism or for a Jewish socialist movement at the present time . . . Jewish socialism, unlike the German or even Russian variety, is, on the whole, theoretical, derived from books rather than real life. . . . Socialism is readily accepted by Jewish toilers because they have a greater degree of intellectual development; it is nourished by a revolutionary feeling aroused by the denial of rights to the Jewish people . . . With the defeat of autocracy and the granting of equal rights to the Jews, the well-spring of Jewish socialism—the revolutionary feeling—will dry up. The reverse current would set in: assimilation and its complement, Russian bourgeois patriotism, will become the dominant ideology of the Jewish people.

One may infer therefrom that the so-called immediate program could have at most only a palliative effect, without influencing the broader national ideals. Nor could it alter the abnormal structure of Jewish economy, which is the primary source of our troubles.

At any rate, it is clear to all that the social-political struggle in the Diaspora had no relation to the final Territorialist objective. These are separate planes without any common point of intersection. We must continue the struggle against Tsarist despotism, of course, we must continue it not only as citizens but as socialists, as long as we remain in Russia. That, however, has nothing to do with our Territorialist efforts or objectives.

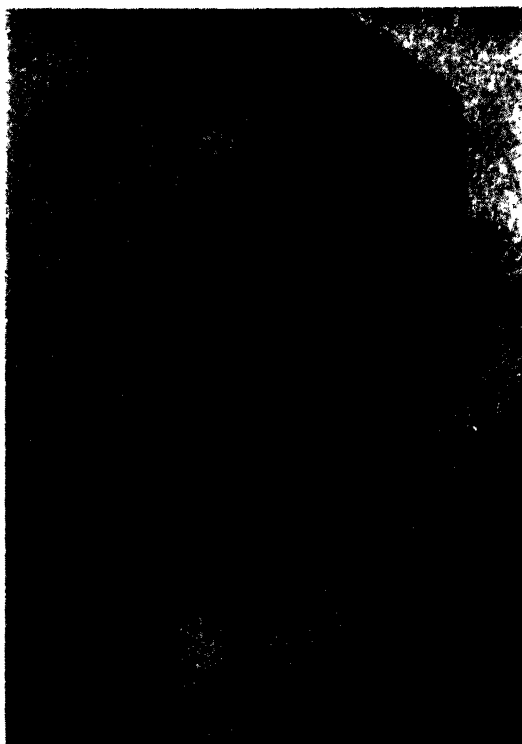
On the other hand, a kind of merger is effected between Zionism and world Socialism, for our national movement is really an effort to transform the Jewish people into a productive people . . . In other words, Zionism is the realization of Socialism among the Jewish people.

The weak point in this theory was the unanswered question: How was this ideal of Territorialism to be realized? Where could the positive economic and social factors be

found that would provide for the creation of a concentrated Jewish settlement in a separate territory? The theoreticians of the movement, first in the ranks of Poale Zion and later in the Zionist Socialist Party, racked their brains over this cardinal question. Among the theories developed, the most popular one affirmed that the necessary social and economic forces might indeed be found in the permanence of Jewish mass emigration. Jewish emigrants—so the theory went—were squandering large sums of money, due to the fact that the emigration process was chaotic and unorganized. As soon as order could be established, it would be possible to control the emigration movement, and to use for purposes of colonization the large sums now being wasted. However, this theorizing satisfied almost no one. The cardinal question remained unanswered, and years later a basic revision of the entire approach had to be made.

### 3. THE JEWISH SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY

At the very outset, at the Kiev Conference in fact, vigorous criticism was directed against the dominant Zionist Socialist theory by spokesmen of the opposing faction. These were primarily nationally-minded socialists who had theretofore for the most part stood aloof from Zionism. They argued that Territorialism by its very nature was a purely nationalistic ideology. No matter how one tried to shake off its nationalist character, to veil it in terms of pseudo-Marxist phraseology, or to disguise it with economic terminology, the nationalist idea was always sure to crop up. Indeed, the economic factor, the problem of proletarianizing the masses in the Diaspora was, after all, nothing more than the objective expression of the general abnormal situation which characterized the life of the Jewish people. It was, therefore, necessary to lay stress on the national factor, to keep in mind its growing role and significance, and to rely on the prospect of its further development. In the ideological atmosphere then prevailing in the Jewish socialist ranks,



NACHMAN SYRKIN (1867-1924)

these were heretical ideas. (Otto Bauer's book, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, which was to sanction the national movement in terms of Marxian social democracy, was published only in 1907). At that time, in 1903-1905, the nationalist view was completely unacceptable to Russian Social Democracy, which exercised a great influence on the Jewish socialists. Marx and Engels had neither clarified the subject, nor taken it into full account. Authoritative commentators, like Kautsky and Plekhanov, had banned it. It would seem, therefore, that it should also have been regarded as inadmissible by Jewish Social Democrats, especially the young Marxist Poale Zion, which had to struggle for recognition in the Social Democratic world and, therefore, watch its steps lest it be accused of "heresy".

The theoreticians of another opposing trend took strong issue with the prevailing Marxist doctrine. These, the so-called *Vozrozhdentsi* (derived from the Russian journal *Vozrozhdeniye—Rebirth*), and later the



leaders of the Jewish Socialist Party, opposed Kautsky's contention that, in destroying the economic boundaries between nations and states, capitalism also abolished national distinctions, and by so doing inevitably led to an international amalgamation of peoples. This Jewish group contended, on the contrary, that the nationalizing process was actually in the ascendant, and was being fostered by the very development of capitalist economy. Capitalism was opening up for the masses of the people the avenues of social and political life and thought, and was providing them with an opportunity for self-expression and self-organization. By mobilizing and developing their collective forces, it was preparing them for independent social and political action. Thus they became the bearers of historical processes and at the same time developed the normal forms of a creative national life. That, they maintained, was a sociological law, constantly confirmed by universal history. It explained the multiplicity of national liberation movements as well as the flowering of the many national cultures which especially characterized the capitalist era.

This school also opposed the wholly negative attitude toward the *galut*, and made a more positive evaluation of its tendencies and possibilities. They repudiated the notion that the territorial edifice should rely on factors of a purely negative character; they felt it could be built only on a positive base, through forces that were creative in their nature. Therefore, they rejected the Zionist philosophy of history adopted by the Poale Zionists, which implied the absolute "negation" of the *galut* and constantly underlined its futility. They felt, first, that such an outlook was false and in conflict with reality; secondly, that if it was true, it would have proved Zionism to be a wild Utopia, since nothing can emerge *ex nihilo*. Only the Diaspora itself could make Zionism a reality. If the *galut* were indeed as backward, barren and futile as it was portrayed by the Zionist and Poale Zionist pessimists, then it was simply impossible to

imagine how it could achieve so grandiose a feat as the realization of Zionism. They therefore tried to find in the *galut* positive tendencies, creative forces and factors, that could lead to the final goal of Territorialism. Upon analysis they discovered that, despite the extremely unfavorable conditions which prevailed in the Diaspora, Jewish life still flourished and was creative in the socio-cultural sphere. In the capitalist world, especially, the Jewish people, at least where it was concentrated in large masses, was steadily being differentiated into a variety of classes and groups, and yet was becoming more unified as a collective entity. True, the integration of Jews into modern industrial production was faced with transitional difficulties. But it would be wrong to infer from this that it was absolutely impossible for them to become productive workers. The development of the two great Jewish centers in Russia and America contradicted such an assumption. Even more than in the economic field, such progress was evident in the sphere of social-cultural life. The very rise of Zionism and the labor movement, the blossoming forth of modern secular literature in Yiddish and Hebrew, of Jewish art and the Yiddish theater, the complexity of organizational life—all this was the best proof of an active, creative existence.

Nevertheless, within the very creative processes of the Diaspora, they saw the potential of Territorialism. The projected radical reconstruction of the whole of Jewish life, its transition from a condition of dispersal to a state of concentrated territorial unity, they considered not in terms of a fantastic leap from "nothing" into "everything", but rather as an historical process of a gradual socio-economic and cultural consolidation of the Jewish people. This process was to culminate in the establishment, in accordance with the principle of "personal-national" autonomy, of bodies recognized in public law (Seims or Diets) which should have semi-governmental power to regulate Jewish life and thus

create, within the Diaspora, the prerequisites of the projected Jewish state.

The act of territorial colonization itself, in their view, was to be the final stage in this nationalization process. For the present, the time and place for the realization of Territorialism were to remain indeterminate. "Territorialism," they declared, "will be realized only at the time when and in the place where the social and national conditions will be ripe for it." The theory of the two separate planes was accordingly wholly alien to them. They could not admit that activities in the Diaspora had no relation to the Territorialist movement, but regarded both as aspects of a unified, organically-integrated process.

Both groups, the Zionist Socialists and the Jewish Socialists, which had become two distinct parties in the stormy years of 1905-1906 (the former at a conference in Odessa in the spring of 1905, and the latter a year later, at its conference in Kiev), seceded from the Zionist Organization. The Zionist Socialist delegates had taken part in the Congress at Basel in 1905. That Congress, however, had rejected the Uganda project by a majority vote and thus, in principle, all projects of territorial colonization outside of Palestine. Consequently, the Socialist delegates, together with the faction which held firm to the principle of Territorialism, left the movement and formed the Jewish Territorial Organization (JTO). The Jewish Socialist Party, which deferred the realization of Territorialism to an indefinite future, was, in principle, not concerned with participation in any organization undertaking Zionist or Territorialist tasks or engaged on plans for territorial colonization.

#### 4. THE POALE ZION

The two left-wing parties together comprised an overwhelming majority of the rapidly growing Poale Zion organizations. There remained a small minority group which clung to the Palestinian ideal and rejected all other solutions; these Labor Zionists were the followers of Ber Borochov.

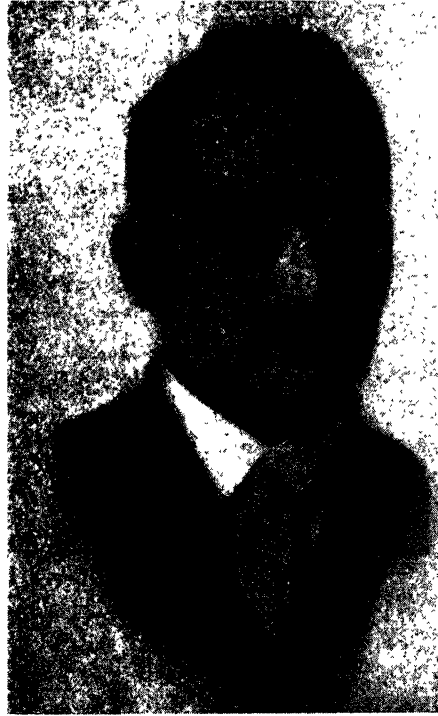
By virtue of his extraordinary ability, profound knowledge, amazing energy and idealistic devotion to the responsible task which he assumed, Borochov became the recognized leader and theoretician of the Poale Zionists. Under his direction the Jewish Social Democratic Workers' Party Poale Zion was founded in February 1906 at the Poltava Convention.

In its immediate program for the Diaspora, as well as in its general national ideology, the new party was much closer to the former Jewish Socialist Party than to the Zionist Socialists. It accepted the national autonomy program including the idea of a democratic representation of the Jewish populations through a "Seim." Yet while stressing nationalism, the Poale Zionists based their entire program on a strictly Marxian theory, which was applied even to its position on Palestine without the slightest romantic tinge. In general, Poale Zionism, in its ideological struggle with the other Jewish socialist parties, made a consistent effort to prove that it was the sole Jewish proletarian, socialist, class-conscious, Marxist party. In one of his first pamphlets, "What Do the Poale Zionists Want?", Borochov defined the Marxist basis and formulated the program and ideology of Poale Zionism as follows:

The solution of the national question must be achieved, like all the other points of the proletarian minimum program, through the class struggle, which is the one instrument wholly within the control of the proletariat . . . The solution of the national question by means of the class struggle must be the consequence of a spontaneous process, since the social conditions and forces are actually the determining elements of life, while the conscious action of the organized proletariat is able to regulate only what life itself has already created.

Just as socialism is becoming a reality through the spontaneous process of the concentration of production, independent of any conscious aim, so likewise

Jewish mass emigration is spontaneously beginning to concentrate on a territorial goal, equally independent of outside pressure . . . This territory must be semi-agrarian in its socio-economic structure, so as to provide room and opportunity for the small and middle-class capitalist as well as for the worker. These productive forces can develop freely only if the indigenous population has not yet had the opportunity to consolidate its economic and social life, and in general has not yet been thoroughly integrated into an economically closed organism—a nation—which could enter into national competition with Jewish capital and labor. This requires a region for which there is primarily a foreign market and which is not limited to domestic demand. Actually, only Palestine offers such a territory, and only there is such an economic autonomy of the Jewish community in the process of a spontaneous development. In this way, Territorialism, as the economic revolutionary movement in Jewish life, is being attained naturally. If this stupendous transformation required artificial stimulation, the Territorialist ideal would be a Utopian dream, as indeed it is in the Socialist Zionist and the Jewish Socialist programs. In our own program Territorialism presents not a historical aspiration but rather a historical necessity. It is for us, therefore, not only a demand but the very heart of our scientific prognosis for the Jewish future. As long as we had no concreté territory and had to deal only with an airy abstraction, so long did our Territorialist ideal remain but a subjective desire, the achievement of which was naturally bound up with adventurism and programmatic speculation. Territorialism, however, becomes a historical necessity when an exact, objective analysis of the tendencies inherent in Jewish emigration clearly indicates the specific territory in which the Jewish emigrants would spontaneously concentrate.



BER BOROCHOV (1881-1917)

At this point, Borochov proceeds to discuss the role of the proletarian class struggle in the realization of Territorialism:

At the present moment both the Jewish bourgeoisie and the Jewish proletariat are interested in the achievement of Territorialism. However, the basic antagonism between the two groups is already clear. The bourgeoisie pins its main hope on diplomatic negotiations with the Sultan and an artificial colonization scheme. We, on the contrary, reject all makeshift politics, as well as irresponsible colonization schemes. This ideological rift, which establishes us here as the chief enemies of the bourgeois Zionists, will in Palestine itself precipitate the severest form of class struggle . . . As long as proletarian Territorialism was in its Utopian stage, it could be represented as a project to be achieved without travail, with peace and serenity, through diplomatic negotiations, even through establishing a close union between the bourgeoisie and the

proletariat; indeed, that is the way it appears to the Zionist Socialists. We, however, consider Territorialism to be a profound revolutionary process, replete with the most complex forms of the social struggle, and the proletariat takes part in these processes through the class struggle.

Borochoy also saw a relationship between the revolutionary struggle in the Diaspora and the prospects of Territorialist Zionism: "Only the energetic and stubborn struggle of the Jewish proletariat in the Diaspora will gain for the Jews a guarantee of free admission to Palestine, as well as all the other necessary guarantees."

#### V. CULTURAL NATIONALISM AND AUTONOMISM

Despite the wide divergence of opinion that divided the various groups that stemmed from Zionism—Orthodox and middle-class Zionists on the one hand; the radical Poale Zionists and the Socialist Territorialists on the other—all these parties were united on the central issue, namely, categorical opposition to assimilation. Furthermore, they were also in basic agreement that only an autonomous life in a land of its own could assure the normal, creative national development of the Jewish people. All agreed that they must strive to overcome the abnormal and unsound condition caused by the *galut*. This was the basic viewpoint even of Ahad Haam who, while holding that a geographical reunion of the dispersed was not feasible, strove to achieve a cultural deliverance from the *galut* through the creation of a spiritual haven in Palestine.

Zionism, however, was not the only social and ideological movement which worked toward consolidation. There were rival trends which likewise had repudiated assimilationism and moved in the direction of national integration. Unlike the Zionists, however, these groups made no attempts to "negate" in principle the future of the Diaspora, but accepted it as a permanent condition. They regarded the Jewish dispersal and diffusion over many lands not

as an abnormal and unhealthy national situation, but rather as a higher level of national life. Inasmuch as the *galut* transcended territorial limitations with their social and political restraints, according to this view, it endowed the people with a degree of spiritual independence from material conditions and with a cultural scope not hemmed in by narrow social-political fences and state-boundaries.

This positive attitude toward the Diaspora eventually came to dominate a large section of the Jewish people, beginning with that part of the labor movement already organized in the Bund, and extending well into the democratically-minded middle-class intelligentsia. The spokesman of this trend among the latter, the man who consolidated the movement and gave it its ideological basis, was the noted historian, Simon Dubnow. Beginning as an extreme proponent of anti-traditionalism in Jewish life, an adherent of the Haskalah movement with cosmopolitan leanings, Dubnow at first strongly opposed nationalism, but after an intensive study of Jewish history, he gradually adopted a national ideology which he called "spiritual nationalism." Dubnow developed his views in a series of "Letters on Judaism—Old and New," which he began to publish in the Russian journal *Voskhod* in 1897, the year which saw the establishment both of the Zionist Organization and of the Bund.

According to Dubnow the Jewish nation represented the highest national type, the "cultural-historical or spiritual nation." He argued as follows:

How else could this scattered people have maintained itself in the course of so many centuries without either state or territory? Was it because of Biblical Judaism, of the discipline of the Talmud and Rabbinism, of the isolation of the ghetto, of internal autonomy, of the Messianic faith in political renaissance? Yes, but these were mere expressions of a national existence, forms that changed in the process of history. The basic element

in the vitality of the Jewish people lies rather in the fact that after it had passed the stage of its original racial unity and the territorial-political phase of nationhood, it succeeded in establishing its life on the highest of all levels—the spiritual or cultural-historical; it successfully consolidated itself as a spiritual nationality, which survives by virtue of its innate and conscious “will to live.” The Jewish people has been able to achieve this because in the combination of forces which shaped it, the physical, political, and material-cultural elements have been fused with a larger proportion of spiritual-cultural elements than was the case with any other people. The intensity of these spiritual factors always compensated for the diminution of its political strength, just as, for instance, the failing eyesight of an individual is compensated by a proportional sharpening in his senses of touch and hearing.

The subjective or spiritual factors in the national character constitute the crown of its development; all material factors are but stepping-stones that lead to this summit. Thus one sees clearly how much in error are they—Jews as well as non-Jews—who deny the right of Diaspora Jewry to call itself a nation on the ground that it lacks those external attributes of a nation which were lost or abandoned in the course of its long historical journey, but which were compensated for by a proportionate intensification of its spiritual attributes. One must be completely incapable of understanding the inner character of the national “ego” and the process of its development, to deny the term “nation” to that oldest of all historical entities which for the past two millennia has in fact presented the quintessence of nationhood, a nation of the purest spiritual quality, almost entirely unadulterated by those incidental ingredients which near-sighted people regard as the purest gold of national existence.



SIMON DUBNOW (1860-1941)

If, however, this is really the case, if the spiritual-cultural, historically developed Jewish nationality has outgrown the conditions of territorial concentration, then in both the practical and in the juridical-moral sense, all the lands of the Diaspora may be regarded as “territories” of the Jewish people. Dubnow then demonstrates by means of a historical review that:

Jews have, even from a formal point of view, an incontestable right to dwell on European territory... Jews may say to the Christian peoples of Europe: “You have not the right to exclude us from territories where our forefathers were settled in ancient times as subjects of the Roman Empire which had wrested from us our oriental fatherland. We are the descendants of old Roman colonists of Jewish nationality in Europe. The great migration of peoples which marks the birth of the European order of national states found our colonies already well-established in many of the countries of Europe. You were then the infants of

civilization, ignorant pagans, while we dwelt beside you as a cultured settlement and the bearers of the oldest world religion. Are we then worse than the descendants of the Huns, of the barbaric Goths, and of the other uncivilized tribes, in part of Asiatic origin, who divided among themselves the inheritance of ancient Rome? Will anyone claim that the right to a given country can be gained only by the sword and by conquest, but not through the natural and more humane way of settlement and cultural development in the course of many centuries? Everything that has been said here about Western Europe, the direct heir of ancient Rome, applies equally to the Jews of Eastern Europe. Insofar as America is concerned . . . apart from the fact that Jews accompanied Columbus in the discovery of the New World, the industrial colonization of Jews in North and South America in the sixteenth and particularly in the seventeenth century ran parallel with the general European colonization. Jews took an active part in the establishment of factories and of urban industrial centers and participated equally with other nationalities in the development of American civilization.

Like the Zionists, Dubnow emphatically repudiated the assimilationist ideology. He writes:

What a perverted idea of nationalism ruled the circles of the so-called "progressive" Jews in the West and in Russia! How grievous was their error, when, in the name of progress, they condemned so genuinely progressive a principle as the right of every historical nation to a free development of its own individuality! These men confused two contradictory concepts: national individualism and national egoism. They forgot that if it is criminal to stifle the urge of any nation to its freedom, it is a moral obligation to defend one's own individual freedom. In fighting for the principles of freedom and equality, they were in fact also providing

a basis for the destruction of these same principles, for they were repudiating their own inner national freedom in favor of a condition of utter irresponsibility on the part of other nations. They recognized the right of the surrounding peoples to assimilate Jews and, by so doing, the representatives of "emancipated" Jewry actually sanctioned the legitimacy of a national egoism among these peoples, while denying their own people the right of natural individuality. While acting in this manner, they regarded themselves as the knights of a universalistic ideal and believed that because of our national self-negation, our fawning and groveling, we would be more respected and loved. Experience had not yet taught them that respect is accorded only to a personality which respects itself, to character and not to a servile creature which surrenders its all and permits the effacement of its own individuality.

On the question of the organization of Jewish national life and the recognition of the problems facing the Jewish people in the lands of its dispersion, Dubnow gave an exhaustive answer, in accordance with his basic view of the Jewish national genius:

In each nation endowed with the capacity to thrive, the effort to preserve its historical form always goes hand in hand with the effort toward its further development and perfection. All the natural inclinations of the national organism express themselves in autonomistic tendencies . . . Autonomy, as a historical postulate, is thus the inviolable right of every national individuality. The forms and degrees of this autonomy will, however, vary widely, depending upon the political and social conditions in which the given nation within a multi-national state finds itself . . . How then should Jewish autonomism assert itself? It must, of course, be in full agreement with the character of the Jewish national idea. Jewry, as a spiritual or cultural nation,

cannot in the Diaspora seek territorial or political separatism, but only a social or a national-cultural autonomy.

In the revolutionary years 1905-1906, when both the general and the Jewish life of Russia was about to be rebuilt on new foundations, Dubnow thus formulated the basic principles and concrete forms of national-secular autonomy for Russian Jewry:

Its basis must be communal self-government and freedom in the use of its language in its schools and communal institutions. An extensive community organization must be built up on this foundation to encompass all aspects of self-government. Here is the general plan of this organization, which is based on historical precedents and on current practical needs, and which could be achieved even under a moderate constitutional monarchy:

1) The unit of self-government is the Jewish community—not the religious, i.e., the synagogue membership, but the national community, i.e., the entire adult Jewish population of the particular area, whose affiliation with the community is signified by the payment of a stipulated tax to its treasury.

2) The instrument of self-government in every community is the council, to be periodically chosen from among the legal membership of the community and responsible to the general assembly of the membership. It conducts all the communal institutions, the educational, charitable, and religious . . . The elementary Jewish school is completely subject to the community's control. The instruction is conducted either in Yiddish or in Hebrew (depending upon the subject matter and the type of school), according to a curriculum certified for all such schools by the central communal organization.

3) In order to unify all the activities of all Jewish communities in Russia, and in order to solve general national ques-

tions there shall be set up an all-embracing Union of Communities with a central organ in the form of a Congress or *Vaad* (as it was termed in old Poland).

4) This Congress shall consist of 300 delegates, chosen from all the communities (one delegate for every 10,000 adults); shall hold annual sessions at a designated time (to last not less than a month) at one of the important Jewish centers.

5) The functions of the Congress shall be: a) the regulation of communal self-government, by prescribing the statutes common to all communities and their local institutions, and the curricula of the Jewish schools; b) the establishment of central institutions designed to foster the national culture: secondary and higher schools, teachers' institutes, rabbinical seminaries and research academies; c) to intervene in economic life so as to increase the well-being of these communities through the development of co-operatives and trade unions, the regulation of emigration, etc.; d) to influence parliamentary action in questions pertaining to Jewry, both in the parliament of all Russia, and in the provincial assemblies; this activity may be in the form of petitions, declarations, delegations, etc.

6) The decisions of the Congress shall be enforced by the permanent executive committee which shall maintain regular contact with the local organs of communal self-government as well as with the highest governmental agencies. In order that the plan of this communal organization may be elaborated in detail, a Constituent National Assembly shall be convoked, consisting of representatives of all the Jewish communities, to be elected on the basis of equal, universal suffrage.

However, Dubnow did not regard such a national autonomy in the various countries as completely self-sufficient. "The basis of our national idea consists in the fact that all the scattered parts of the Jewish Dias-

pora constitute one indivisible people, united by common interests. In all periods of our history, there was a clear awareness or a confused feeling of the need for a general Jewish organization which could integrate the forces and protect the interests of the entire Diaspora." After referring to the role of the Alliance Israélite Universelle and especially to "our unique national organization," the periodic congresses of the Zionist Organization with its ramified activities, Dubnow concluded that a similar Congress, not as a party convention but as a general Jewish assembly

. . . must become the instrument of all parties and factions which accept the Jewish national idea . . . The Zionist Congress has proclaimed in the name of all Jewry: We wish to be and we can be a nation in our own territory, under definite conditions and guarantees. The General Jewish Congress will proclaim a manifesto more in harmony with history and with the present situation: "We have been and we will continue to be a nation throughout the vast extent of the Diaspora; we have our national interests everywhere and are bound to protect them by establishing the necessary conditions and legal guarantees within the bounds of possibility." Of course, if any particular party includes "within the bounds of possibility" the political renaissance in Palestine, it will be its responsibility to strive for this; this party, however, must bear in mind that its objective is but one part of the common national task. The General Jewish Congress will have to review all the basic questions of our political, social and cultural life and agree on the forms of the national organization of Jewry in harmony with the conditions prevailing in each country.

One of the very special tasks of this national organization will be to regulate Jewish emigration. A regrettable product of our Diaspora, emigration is frequently the only means of mitigating Jewish suf-

fering, not merely of a personal, but of a national character. Under the conditions of our history, this fatal necessity of emigration takes on the character of a powerful instrument of national survival. It leads the masses of our people from lands of anti-Jewish hatred to lands which offer better conditions for the Jewish struggle for material and spiritual existence, and thus provides new centers to replace those which are falling into ruin.

## VI. REVOLUTION AND REACTION IN RUSSIA (1905-1914)

### 1. THE PRINCIPLE OF NATIONAL RIGHTS

All the Jewish organizations and political parties which emerged in Russia during 1905-1906, adopted the principle of "full" rights, not merely civic and political, but national rights as well. At their Wilno Conference in March 1905 representatives of the different factions founded the "Association for the Achievement of Full Rights for the Jewish People in Russia," and by a large majority adopted the following basic principle: "The objective of the Association is the full achievement of the civic, political and national rights of the Jewish People in Russia." This resolution was supported not only by the avowed nationalists, represented by Dubnow and the Zionists who later adopted at Helsinki the principle of full national autonomy as the basis for their immediate Diaspora program, but even by the radical intelligentsia organized in the "Jewish Democratic Group" of L. Bramson and his comrades, who stressed political work among the general, non-Jewish parties. Moreover, the resolution received the support of the moderate "Jewish People's Group," headed by M. Winaver and H. Sliosberg, which was then not yet free from assimilationist leanings. In the revolutionary mood of the time, when the various oppressed nationalities in Tsarist Russia fought passionately for their national freedom, and when in the Jewish world, too, mass tension stimulated the growth of such significant integration movements as Zion-



ism and the Bund, at such a time it was impossible to silence the demand for full national rights for the Jewish community of six million souls.

If we compare the mood of the Jewish masses and intelligentsia in Russia during the struggle for their emancipation, with the mood which prevailed at a parallel stage in Western Europe, we see the extraordinary progress made by the Jewish community as a whole. The "gift" of equal rights in the West had involved the complete repudiation of the national *ego*; not only was the proposition of assimilation spurned entirely, not only was there no denial of the national identity—but there was the positive demand for a guarantee of civic rights and for the creation of suitable conditions for the national and cultural development of the Jewish people. The high tide of the national mood prevailing in those days is reflected in the courageous resolution adopted at the second convention of the aforementioned "Full Rights" Association, held in St. Petersburg in November 1905: "In order to achieve the civic, political and national rights of the Jewish people in Russia, the Convention resolves to take steps for the immediate summoning on the basis of equal suffrage of a Jewish National Assembly which, with the consent of the Jewish population, shall decide on the forms and principles of Jewish national self-determination and the foundations of its internal organization."

The Russian Revolution of 1905 which had raised hopes to fever pitch, was, however, not fated to succeed. The reactionary forces of the old regime, at first confused and helpless, soon recovered their bearings and set out to prepare the counter-revolution. The state employed the time-honored method of turning the wrath of the people against the eternal scapegoat—the Jew. Through the length and breadth of the Pale a tempest of pogroms and massacres raged, planned and organized by the government itself with the aid of its Black Hundreds. As long as the Russian revolutionary forces were not completely crushed,

the Jews, too, offered stout resistance to the wave of terror and reaction. But when the tide of the revolution began to recede and the forces of the counter-revolution gripped the land, the Jewish population could only register bitter political disillusionment. After years of the most intense organizational and political activity came the anticlimax, a period of disintegration and prostration. This was clearly evident among the Jewish Socialist parties as well as in the various middle-class circles. The third Conference of the "Full Rights" Association, which met at St. Petersburg in February 1906, was its last. Its utter disintegration soon became manifest. The first to leave were the Zionists. They were followed by the Jewish People's Group; the consistent national program of the Association could not but be a burden to them in their semi-assimilationist mood. They now were content with the nebulous formula of "national self-determination." Presently the Jewish Democratic Group also left the Association. Dubnow and his adherents founded the People's Party, but it had arrived upon the scene too late; Jewish social and political life was already on the downgrade.

## 2. CULTURAL RESURGENCE DURING THE PERIOD OF REACTION

The forces which had been aroused and mobilized in the social and political struggle, and the energy which had been accumulated, still sought an outlet. This soon became apparent in the field of Jewish culture. During the very years of the reaction (which was to last until the outbreak of the First World War) a marked cultural revival took place. The most characteristic sign of this period is to be found in the dominant position which Yiddish began to assume in Jewish life. Already during the preceding years of revolution there were clear indications of the exclusive role which the mother-tongue was assuming in all matters related to social-political enlightenment and the organization of the Jewish masses. Not only was the role and prestige of Yiddish thus enhanced, but the vernacular of

the masses was greatly enriched and raised to the level of a modern cultural language.

One of the most significant developments of the period was the growth of the press in Yiddish. There was also a flowering of Yiddish literature and partly of Hebrew literature. Attempts to create a modern Jewish theater were made. There was also a rapid increase of interest in the problems of the Jewish secular school. The Society for the Dissemination of Enlightenment (Mefitzei Haskalah) expanded its activities and, renewing its program, endeavored to create a network of elementary schools. A fierce battle raged over the medium of instruction in the schools. The hectic disputes that had formerly concerned social-political issues, now were reflected in the impassioned language-controversy. The assimilationist trend which in the past had with great boldness urged the adoption of the language of the country no longer showed its old aggressiveness. Its adherents surrendered their theory, though perhaps not their habits, so that the struggle was between Yiddish and Hebrew. The various socialist parties, the Bund, the Zionist Socialists, the Jewish Socialists, and to an extent even the Poale Zionists favored the full hegemony of Yiddish in Jewish social life. In its uncompromising opposition to Hebrew, the Bund was even inclined to make concessions in favor of Russian, while the Zionists and their sympathizers advocated the full hegemony of Hebrew. A compromise position between Yiddish and Hebrew, but with a preference for the former was taken by Dubnow's People's Party. Both camps, the Yiddishists and the Hebraists, frequently went to the most violent extremes in their ideological battle. Generally speaking, however, the fight forced both camps to organize their forces. In this connection it is worthy of note that the Yiddish Conference at Czernowitz in 1908 proclaimed Yiddish a national language of the Jewish people; and that in December 1909 the Association for the Hebrew Language and Culture was established.

### 3. PRACTICAL ZIONISM; THE SECOND PERIOD OF IMMIGRATION

Unlike the parties and groups for whom participation in the social and political struggle in the Diaspora was essential, and who were experiencing a serious inner crisis during this period of reaction, the World Zionist Organization, committed as it was to promote a Jewish exodus and the creation of a homeland, was much less affected by the developments of events. If anything, it was stimulated and given greater significance by the turn of the tide. As the "Helsinki program" of 1906 for immediate work in the Diaspora fell into the background, Zionism's center of gravity shifted to specific Zionist problems and to the practical aspects of the settlement in Palestine. The political horizons of Zionism were considerably narrowed following the death of Herzl in 1904 and the rejection of the Uganda project. The hope of obtaining a charter for Palestine now became more tenuous than ever. There was one moment, it is true, when Zionist prospects seemed to flare up, namely, when in 1908 the Young Turks initiated a revolution in the Ottoman Empire. It soon became evident, however, that the new constitutional rulers pursued a policy which was even more centralistic and nationalistic than that of the autocratic Sultan. At this juncture the political aspirations of Zionism appeared more unrealistic than ever before. Inasmuch as the opposition to Territorialism had triumphed, the Zionist Organization had no alternative but to resume the work begun by Hibbat Zion, i.e., to promote the small-scale settlement of Palestine.

Conditions were now more favorable for such modest activities than they had been in the days of Hibbat Zion. Several decades of this small-scale colonization had produced some significant results. Valuable experience had been acquired. The first period in pioneering, always the most difficult, which had called for such heavy sacrifices, was now over. A base had also been provided for the revival of Hebrew, and this cultural gain,

dynamically charged as it was, cast a spell on the hearts of all Zionists devoted to Jewish culture. Moreover, the Zionist movement was now well established, both in its central organization and in its affiliated branches; it exercised a considerable influence on the masses and, modest as its financial resources were, it had at its disposal sufficient means to continue the work in Palestine.

Another factor of great import now made itself felt. That section of the idealistic youth which had formerly been swept away by the national and socialist revolutionary movements, now, in the years of reaction, could not endure the stifling atmosphere of social passivity and began to stream into Palestine. Although the majority of this youth belonged to radical Zionist or Poale Zionist groups, it also included Zionist Socialists and even some elements from the Jewish Socialist party. These constituted the so-called "second *aliyah*" and wrote a glorious page in the history of the settlement of Palestine. They laid the foundation of the Histadrut, the Palestine Labor Federation, which was destined to grow into the largest and most firmly-knit Jewish labor organization in the world. They created the *Kvutzah*, the pioneer model for the type of settlement which was to blossom forth in the period following the Balfour Declaration (See *Jewish Colonization in Palestine* in this volume). Above all, they initiated that idealistic atmosphere of enthusiasm and self-sacrifice which later contingents of pioneer youth were to absorb, spiritually, socially and morally. From their ranks also came the main leadership of Palestine labor.

#### 4. THE JEWISH TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

An altogether different situation developed in the group which had left the Zionist ranks and had established the Jewish Territorial Organization (JTO). Its leaders had broader political vistas than the Zionists. They were not limited to a single territory—and one for which there seemed to be no prospects of getting a charter.

They directed their gaze to all those parts of the world where there were uninhabited lands suitable for settlement. Of course, the outside world was not quite ready to accept the Territorialist viewpoint. The argument as to whether the Jews were in essence a separate nation entitled to national aspirations of its own, was still going on. However, those states which possessed unpopulated territories and were concerned with settling them, paid little attention to the controversies over Jewish nationalism. The precedent of the Uganda project gave the Territorialists courage and hope.

In one respect, however, the Territorialists were at a distinct disadvantage as compared with the Zionists. The latter had a specific territory, Palestine, whose very name was a message. Here was a magic lure which summoned pioneers to the country—disregarding the absence of a charter and political safeguards. To compensate, the Territorialist movement would have had to produce a charter for a specific land, and a grand plan of mass colonization, so that a large and inspiring national perspective could be opened up before the Jewish soul.

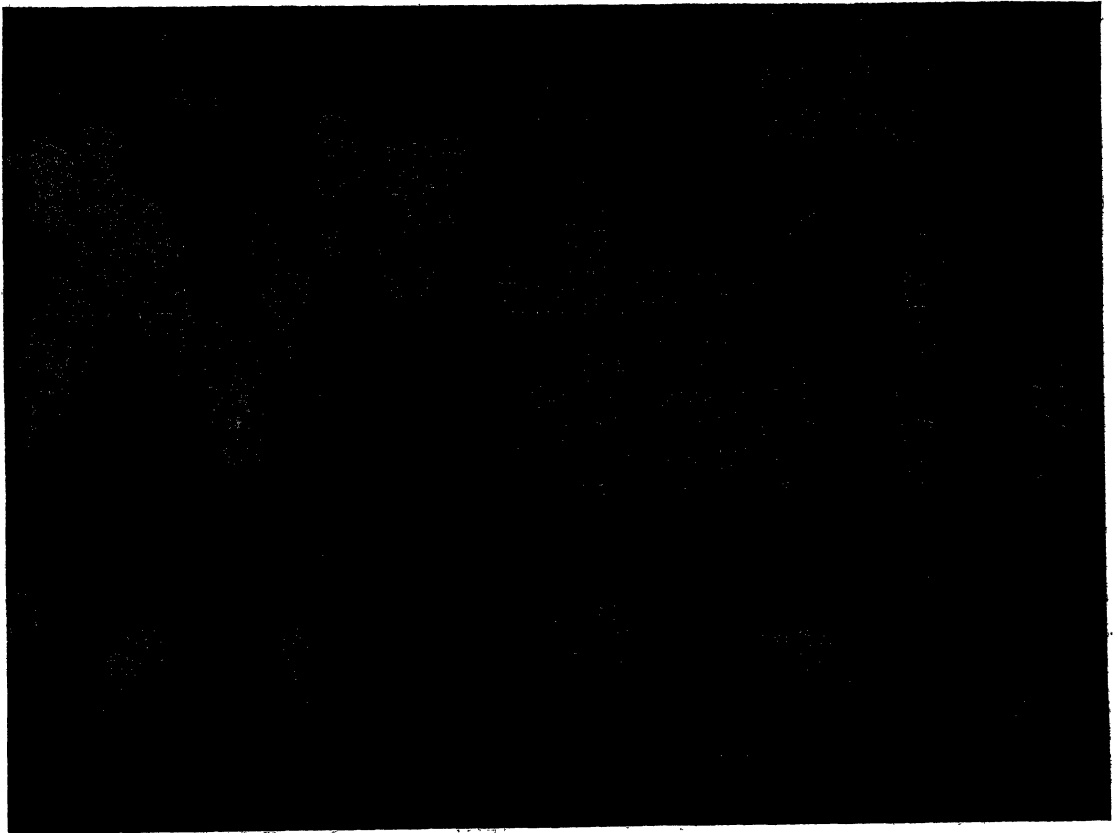
But, to begin with, an essential condition for any mass-colonization project was the pressure of would-be emigrants unable to find a new home. Actually, however, Jewish emigration which, in the aftermath of revolution, pogroms and political reaction grew to an unprecedented degree, had a clear road before it. That road led naturally to the industrialized urban centers of the countries of immigration, especially to those of the United States, where the gates were still open for mass immigration.

The Territorialists had, therefore, to attempt to implement an idea originally conceived by the Zionist Socialists, namely, that a prerequisite of any mass colonization plan was the control of the migration movement, so that it might be led in a predetermined direction. Another reason, and a very important one, led to the same conclusion; the Territorialist movement faced, in fact, the identical problem which had formerly plagued the Zionists: the problem of the

so-called "immediate program," designed to keep the movement alive and to fill it with vital content. In the preparatory stage, the real work was being done only by the leadership, the executive body of the JTO, headed by Israel Zangwill. It had the important task of carrying on negotiations with the governments from which it sought a charter for some specific territory. The general membership, however, had nothing to do, in the meantime, but wait patiently for the successful completion of such negotiations. This could not fail to undermine the vigor and stamina of the organization. An effort to regulate the migration movement was the obvious means to open up broad avenues of practical Territorialist activity.

The first objective of this activity was to divert the stream of emigration from New York and the other congested Eastern areas of the United States towards the more

sparsely settled West and South. An emigration society was formed in Kiev, whose responsibility it was to assemble the emigrants, divide them into groups, conduct them by train to the European ports whence they would sail to Galveston, Texas. There a special committee would direct the new arrivals to the nearby states and find work for them. It soon became apparent, however, that it would be impossible to exercise the desired control. Only a very thin trickle of the migration movement could be directed in this manner; the main volume continued to flow toward precisely the same centers as theretofore. These attracted the newcomer because there he could find an established Jewish milieu, including relatives and former neighbors, and a vibrant Jewish life. It also became increasingly evident that such a regulation of immigration implied a retreat from the prime objective



CONFERENCE OF THE JEWISH TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION. ISRAEL ZANGWILL (STANDING),  
M. MANDELSTAMM (SEATED, LEFT)

of Territorialism, the avowed aim of which was not the dispersal but rather the concentration of the wandering Jewish masses within the confines of a specific territory.

The actual work in the Territorialist field continued to be, as theretofore, the search for a territory which, if it were found suitable for colonization, could become the subject of political negotiations. The last serious project of the JTO was connected with the Portuguese colony of Angola. The expedition which the JTO dispatched to this African territory brought back a favorable report, and the Portuguese government and parliament took, on the whole, a positive interest in the project. But, the outbreak of World War I halted the negotiations and put an end to the plan.

#### 5. AGUDAT YISRAEL

The steady growth of all the new social forces in Jewish life gradually produced an effect on that segment of orthodox Jewry which had always remained aloof from contemporaneous Jewish movements, and to which, generally speaking, the modern forms of Jewish life were alien. An effort was now launched to consolidate the orthodox circles and to create a new community fellowship with political and spiritual goals.

The expansion of the Zionist movement, particularly of the Mizrachi wing, and of the colonization work in Palestine, gave a strong impulse to this attempt. Jewish Orthodoxy was confronted by a new situation: it had to meet a series of problems which were both practical and urgent, and to formulate an appropriate program. An Orthodox Conference was held in Katowice, in May 1912, with delegates from several countries in attendance; there the world organization of Orthodox Jewry was founded under the name of Agudat Yisrael.

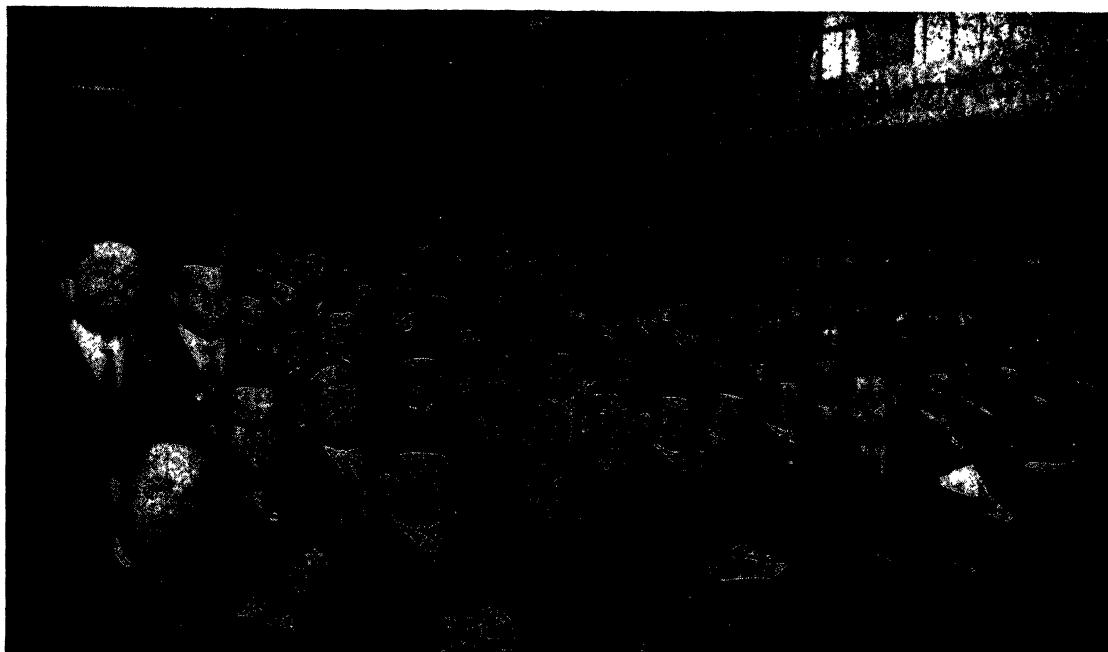
### VII. BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

#### 1. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

In August 1914, the First World War plunged the world into an era of violent so-

cial and national cataclysms which eventually culminated in the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939. The Jewish people found itself in the very center of both world convulsions. The battlefronts of the First World War cut across the Jewries of Lithuania, Poland and Romania; the Second World War overwhelmed the whole of European Jewry. It is manifestly impossible to obtain a clear picture of Jewish social developments during this period of world chaos. Jewish life had been wrenched from its moorings and tossed about by the whirlwinds of destruction. It is also very difficult to describe clearly the ideological trends, and one can only note some characteristic changes within the period involved.

The First World War led to a reawakening and an intensification of Jewish social and political activity which had come to a standstill in the years of extreme reaction in Russia. The Tsarist government and its armed forces, both steeped in Judeophobia, tried to divert toward the Jewish population the popular resentment resulting from the defeats at the front. The myth of the Jew as spy was systematically spread; there were military pogroms and mass expulsions of Jews from frontier and battle zones. Young and old, women and children, were loaded into freight cars and transported to unknown destinations. But, as in the pogrom period of 1905, Russian Jewry did not lose its balance; on the contrary, it collected and mobilized all its forces. A Jewish Political Council was formed in St. Petersburg, in which the various organizations were represented, with the exception of the Bund. The Jewish members of the Duma (Russian Parliament) took an active part in the deliberations of the Council and from time to time non-Jewish leaders of the opposition in the Duma participated in the discussions. The Political Council, it is true, had but little influence. The Russian parliamentary opposition, on which the Council leaned, was itself helpless, for its activities were paralyzed by patriotic war-



WORLD CONGRESS OF AGUDAT YISRAEL, VIENNA, 1929

time considerations. The Political Council, nevertheless, constituted a sort of forum for Jewish opinion. It also stimulated to some extent the crystallization of various social and political groups.

The energy thus mobilized by Russian Jewry was harnessed mainly to the great task of relief. Jacob Lestschinsky, one of the active workers in this mobilization, has told the story in his book *Dos Sovietishe Yidntum*, pp. 53-56:

At every station where a transport of deportees was in transit, the local Jewish community supplied them with food and clothing. Actually this was also a political demonstration. Wherever the refugees came, living quarters, communal kitchens, old-age homes and medical help were provided. At the same time cultural activity was not neglected. Dozens of children's homes, schools and evening courses were established. In normal times, it had been practically impossible to obtain a permit for a modern Yiddish-language school; in the chaos of war the privilege was simply assumed and practiced on a wide scale. Yiddish educational institu-

tions mushroomed. Concurrently, a system of labor relief was organized. The war had created a great demand for workers, and the ORT opened scores of labor bureaus for the training of Jewish workers and directing them to the factories . . .

The hundreds of committees in the large and small towns, where orthodox Jews worked hand in hand with radicals, in effect developed into new, modern Jewish communities. The Central Committees of the various central relief societies actually developed into departments of a united and autonomous Jewish administration. The annual conferences of these Central Committees reflected the complex composition of the Russian-Jewish community, split into various political trends and factions, but nevertheless united in its national life. Heated controversies went on between parties of the right and left, between radical and moderate elements, but the unity of the Jewish population was not disturbed. It was a united and disciplined body that confronted the Russian government.

## 2. THE PERIOD OF REVOLUTION AND CIVIL WAR

The Revolution of March 1917 revealed to the entire Russian nation the gross corruption and abysmal villainy of the Tsarist regime. The Jewish community was alert to the occasion, ready to consolidate and organize its forces for the political struggle.

During the brief interval between the March and October Revolutions when, against the background of war, there was enacted the gigantic drama of the struggle between the forces of democratic freedom and Bolshevism, the Jewish masses showed two tendencies of their own. On the one hand, the more cultivated urban population, instructed by historical experience in the dangers of blind manifestations, associated itself with the forces of liberal democracy. Bolshevism was opposed, at first, not only by the bourgeoisie, but by Jewish labor as well. At the outset all of the Jewish socialist parties engaged in a vigorous fight against the ideology and strategy of Bolshevism. On the other hand, the Jewish masses could be won over only by a positive Jewish-national program. The groups which had made their primary objective the acquisition of equal rights for Jews in civic and political matters, lost their entire *raison d'être* when the Provisional Russian Government, as early as March 22 (April 4, new style), published its decree abolishing all national and religious disabilities. The principle of national autonomy, in greater or smaller measure, now became the dominant concern of Jewish political activity. Characteristically, the Zionist Socialist Party which, during the period of the 1905 Revolution, had vigorously opposed the principle of autonomy, now gave it the fullest endorsement. This party merged with the Jewish Socialist Party to form the United Jewish Socialist Labor Party (the so-called *Fareinikte*). The new organization advocated national autonomy, not merely in the cultural sphere, but as an essential condition of any solution of the social, economic and political problems of

the Jewish people. This party with its essentially Territorialist outlook, was at the same time so devoted to the ideal of national autonomy, that it led the way in the attempts to realize this ideal.

The most favorable setting for the experiment was provided by the Ukraine, which at first declared itself an autonomous part of Russia and later an independent republic. In the Ukraine the revolution was directed mainly by the Ukrainian Social Democrats and Social Revolutionaries, whose national ideologies were in some measure influenced by that of the Jewish socialist parties. Unlike the Poles, the Ukrainians had not yet reached a stage which would encourage their political parties to adopt a program for assimilation of national minorities. Thus the idea of "national-personal" autonomy first found recognition among the ruling parties of the Ukrainian Republic.

In conformity with the program and proposal of the United Jewish Socialist Labor Party, the Ukrainian government established a number of ministries representing the interests of the national minorities, Jewish, Polish and Great Russian. The Minister of Jewish Affairs was Dr. M. Silberfarb, of the United Party. Under his direction the bill concerning "national-personal" autonomy for minorities was framed and duly ratified by the Central Rada, the legislature of the Ukrainian Republic. Feverish activity now developed in all spheres of Jewish political, social and cultural life. The Jewish communities were legalized and reorganized on democratic lines. They won the right and found the possibility to expand their social and cultural work. It was through these agencies, and on the basis of proportional representation, that the Jewish National Assembly of the Ukraine, which met in November 1918 at Kiev, was duly constituted. The Central Culture League, which was founded at Kiev, and which had branches in the provinces, carried through a vast program: it founded schools, libraries, people's universities,

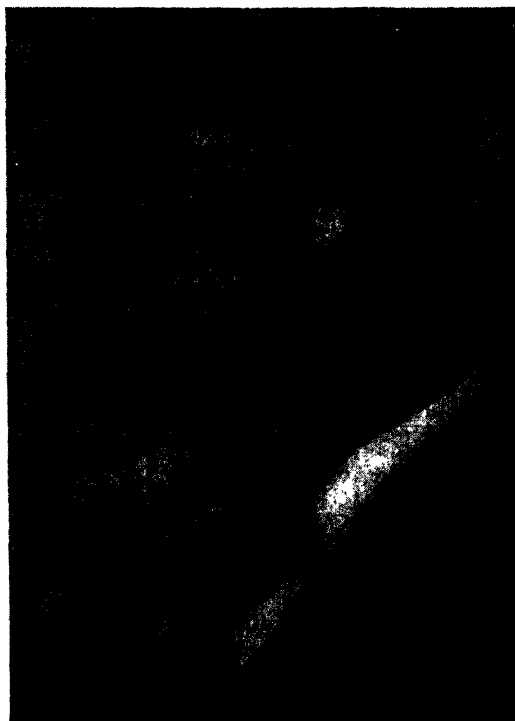
choirs, dramatic studios, a central publishing press, etc.

All this, however, took place while the ground still trembled with the shock of war, revolution and civil strife. The Jewish population of the Ukraine suffered the worst effect of the turbulent period 1918-1921. After the fall of the Provisional Government and the triumph of Bolshevism in Great Russia came the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and the Austro-German occupation of the Ukraine with the puppet Hetman Skoropadskij as the nominal ruler. The collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy and the German Revolution terminated both the occupation and the puppet government. Soon the tides of the counter-revolution rolled over the steppes of the Ukraine. In their campaign against Bolshevism both the Denikin White Guards and the Ukrainian nationalist bands of Petljura, following the custom of the Russian Tsars and the Ukrainian marauders, unleashed a wave of massacres among the Jewish population. More than 2,000 pogroms have been recorded; about 75,000 Jews were murdered and many more wounded. Half a million Jews abandoned their homes and possessions, fleeing from the smaller to the larger towns. The Red Army came to their rescue and the final triumph of the Soviets marked the end of the atrocities.

These violent upheavals led to a basic change in the attitude of the Jewish masses toward the Communist regime. An overwhelming majority of the organized Jewish labor groups and a substantial part of the Jewish intelligentsia accepted the Soviet platform or joined the ranks of the Communists. With the full entrenchment of the totalitarian Bolshevik regime, the attempt to organize the three million Russian Jews as a democratic national entity came to an abrupt end.

### 3. THE BALFOUR DECLARATION, THE EXPANSION OF ZIONISM AND MASS COLONIZATION IN PALESTINE

The period extending from the consolidation of Soviet rule, the termination of the



M. SILBERFARB (1876-1934)

First World War by the Versailles Treaty, and the organization of the League of Nations, up to the outbreak of the Second World War, was one of vast and challenging experiment in Jewish life. The first stage of "vivisection" undergone by the body of Russian Jewry resulted in its distribution among the Soviet Union and the newly-formed states of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Rumania (which annexed Bessarabia). This compact Jewish population of six million had been the matrix of all the national and social trends in modern Jewish life. It had been the chief reservoir of Jewish collective activities, sending out powerful currents throughout the entire Jewish world. The fragmentation of this unified and compact Jewry was in itself a heavy blow to world Jewry. On the other hand, the break-up of old, well-developed units like Russia and Austria-Hungary, and the multiplication of new, artificial boundaries, considerably weakened the sacrosanct status of frontiers.

The organization of the League of Na-



tions was a significant step forward on the road leading to the unification of the whole human family. Despite those basic defects in the structure of the League which doomed it to impotence, it embodied the central trend of modern historical evolution: the historic life of mankind has ceased to be the sum total of the historical development of a number of separate nations and countries, and is becoming more and more the unified history of a family of nations which, though diversified, are closely inter-related. This trend is especially evident in relation to the Jewish people. If we consider the period since the emancipation, and the at least partial integration of the Jewish community with the general population, we shall see that it was precisely after the First World War, with its creation of innumerable new boundaries, that the organic unity and common destiny of the Jewish people became most evident. Two cardinal facts of immense importance, both in principle and in practical influence, contributed to this trend. The first was the Balfour Declaration, assuring the creation of a home for the Jewish people in Palestine under the aegis of the League of Nations; the second was the confirmation by the League of the rights of the Jewish minorities in its member states in Eastern Europe. This was a radical departure from the traditional attitude of the democratic world toward the Jewish people and its problems: Jews were no longer to be regarded merely as a religious community, without national aspirations of its own; they constituted a national entity with the right to an autonomous and, in Palestine, even to an independent existence.

The Balfour Declaration was a supreme triumph for Zionism. The fervent aspiration of an entire Zionist generation, and the dream which the Lovers of Zion had hardly dared to utter aloud—a charter for Palestine—now suddenly became real. The Zionist movement acquired a tremendous impetus. A powerful pioneer youth movement, the *Halutzim*, set in and developed rapidly. The Zionist Organization em-

barked on larger and more varied projects in Palestine, where the number of workers in the cities and on the land grew steadily. The communes (*kvutzot*) and the co-operative workers' settlements aroused widespread enthusiasm; the spirit of idealism and self-sacrifice which permeated them raised immeasurably the prestige of Palestinian colonization. The interest in the enterprise spread from the Jewish communities to non-Jewish democratic and Socialist circles. In the Socialist and Trade Union Internationals, where formerly Jewish labor had been represented exclusively by the Bund and where scant sympathy and understanding had been shown for Jewish national trends, place was now assigned the Poale Zion and the Histadrut. Thus, the idea of a national Jewish homeland found recognition in the general Social Democratic ranks. In fact, vigorous protagonists of the idea appeared even among the leading groups of the socialist movement.

There was, apart from the Balfour Declaration, another very important factor which gave impetus to Palestinian colonization and to the growth of the Zionist movement. This was the stoppage of the flow of mass immigration into the New World. This occurred at a time when the economic and political situation of the Jewish population in Eastern Europe had deteriorated to the point where the necessity to emigrate was greater than ever. The road that led to America was now practically closed, and the current stream of emigration which had formerly flowed westward, now headed toward Palestine.

Jewish colonization in Palestine, however, was confronted by a new and formidable obstacle; the intense opposition of the Arabs of Palestine, supported by the entire Arab world. Riots and pogroms occurred frequently. In the period preceding the outbreak of the Second World War, the extreme Arab nationalists, with the support of the Nazi and Fascist governments, organized a systematic mass terror which to a great extent paralyzed the life of the country. Great Britain, the Mandatory Power,



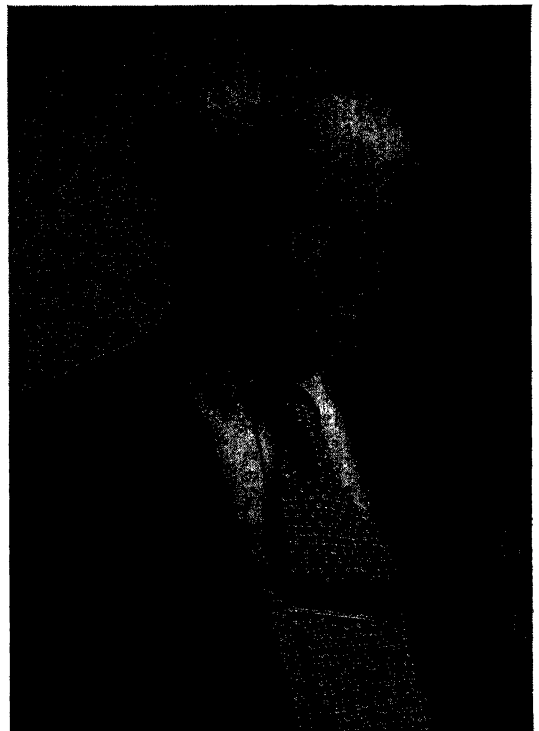
CHAIM WEIZMANN, THE FIRST PRESIDENT  
OF ISRAEL

anxious to avoid antagonizing the Arab world, showed itself susceptible to this pressure, and began to interpret the somewhat vague phraseology of the Balfour Declaration in a manner more acceptable to prevailing Arab opinion. Finally, on the eve of the Second World War, Great Britain issued the so-called White Paper, by which Jewish immigration into Palestine was to be completely suspended as of April 1, 1944.

In spite of these and other difficulties, over 350,000 Jews were actually settled in Palestine between the two World Wars. A monumental experiment in mass colonization, almost without parallel in history, was carried out. In organization and planning, in maintenance of the high social and cultural level of the new settlement, it was a unique accomplishment. The British Peel Commission, which made a thorough study of the situation, in 1937 pronounced the upbuilding of Palestine a model achievement. Thus the widespread belief that the Jews, an agricultural people in ancient times, had lost the capacity to do colonizing, and especially pioneering work, was completely discredited.

The tremendous colonization effort undertaken by the Zionist Organization also attracted intellectuals and philanthropists who, though indifferent and even hostile to the larger Zionist program, were impressed by the work in Palestine as a practical solution to the problems of emigration. Through the newly-created Jewish Agency the philanthropists gave, to a certain extent, political aid to the Zionist effort. The movement thus extended its influence far beyond the Zionist ranks.

This nationalizing effect of Zionism extended even to the thoroughly assimilationist "liberal" elements among the Jews both of Europe and America. Although it represented a basic contradiction of their point of view, many "liberal" Jews began to participate actively in communal affairs of an outspoken national character. Without fully realizing the change in their attitude, many of the "liberals" no longer regarded the Jewish people as a merely religious-ethical



DAVID BEN GURION, PRIME MINISTER OF THE  
PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL

group, but as a national entity. It was, indeed, symptomatic of their new attitude that in 1926 they organized themselves on a world-wide scale by founding the World Union of Liberal Jewry. No less characteristic is the fact that a substantial number of "liberal" Jews participated in the work of Palestinian colonization.

The guarantees undertaken by the League of Nations with respect to Jewish minority rights suffered the same fate as those relating to the Balfour Declaration. Even those nations which had just now achieved their liberation after many generations of oppression, were quick to forget the responsibilities they had assumed toward their Jewish minorities. They found such a defection—as far as the national or ethnic rights of the Jews were concerned—all the easier since the Jewish population itself showed little concern as to these rights. The Jewish groups neither defended their national minority status, nor did they imbue it with a living content. The attempt to put the Jewish national autonomy principle into effect, on the Ukrainian model, was made only in the small country of Lithuania. But once the initial mood of its liberation passed, this country quietly took back the "gift," without arousing any great opposition on the part of the Jewish population. Even the efforts of the Jewish socialist parties in countries with large Jewish communities, as in Poland, to create autonomous spheres in cultural and educational work, failed to elicit a proper response among all strata of the Jewish population.

However, despite these unfavorable circumstances, not a little was accomplished in the cultural and educational fields, both in Yiddish and in Hebrew, thanks to the initiative and energy of the organized Jewish labor groups, on the one hand, and of the various Zionist groups, on the other. (See *The Hebrew School Movement* and *The Yiddish Secular School Movement* in this volume).

#### 4. THE FREELAND LEAGUE

The Jewish Territorial Organization (JTO) had practically ceased to exist during the First World War. The Balfour Declaration rendered any program dealing with Territorialist colonization outside of Palestine extremely difficult. The JTO had lost its *raison d'être*, and Zangwill now formally dissolved it. The Territorialist "United Party" which, together with the other Social Democratic parties, had practically perished in the Soviet Union, was represented by a few weak groups in Poland. They had no program of practical activities, and their continuance as a separate Jewish socialist group, placed between the Bund on the one hand and the Poale Zion party on the other, had no real justification. The artificial means they employed for maintaining their existence, as for instance, their preoccupation with emigration matters, or their association with the Polish Independent Socialist Party (which in its turn soon ceased to exist), was of little help. They became weaker and weaker, and finally disappeared.

It was only after Hitler's rise to power that the Territorialist ideal emerged once more, gathering new adherents and attracting considerable public attention. There were two reasons for this development. First, the anti-Semitic malady had assumed such frightful and unpredictable forms that an acute demand arose for some radical solution to the Jewish problem. It was natural that under these circumstances the Territorialist trend should reawaken. Secondly, Jewish emigration was facing a crisis. The countries of immigration were bolting their doors. The Jewish population trapped in the Nazi hell made frantic efforts to escape. Palestine could not, because of economic and political reasons, accommodate such huge numbers. The idea of Jewish resettlement in some unoccupied territory appeared to many as the only way out of the frightful dilemma. New Territorialist groups were formed in Paris, London, Warsaw, Wilno and in other Polish cities; later,

also in New York and Australia. These organizations were eventually united under the designation of Freeland League.

The tragedy of the Jewish position finally began to trouble the conscience even of the outside world. In the summer of 1938, a conference took place at Evian, France, where the representatives of 32 states met to consider the difficult problem of European emigration. The Conference, however, produced no tangible results. The 32 states refused to admit any considerable group of new immigrants. After the failure of the Evian Conference, several colonization projects were investigated, but the outbreak of the Second World War brought about a temporary slow-down of these activities.

## 5. THE SOVIET UNION

In conformity with the general policy of this great union of peoples, in which the basic principle was the revival and autonomous cultural development of all its national groups, the Soviet Government assured to the Jewish population not only full civic and political rights, but also complete national equality. Jews were granted every opportunity to organize their autonomous cultural life—within the framework, naturally, of the authoritarian regime. This

included the right to establish, at the expense of the state and for the benefit of the whole Jewish population, a complex system of schools and cultural institutions, from the kindergarten to technical and teacher-training institutes, academies and universities. The Jewish population made some use of the opportunity, but by no means to the same extent as did other national groups (See pp. 133-134 in this volume).

This was one of the reasons which prompted the Soviet Government to undertake the creation of an autonomous Jewish center in Birobidjan. On May 7, 1934, the Central Executive Committee of the USSR adopted the resolutions which were to "transform the Birobidjan Jewish National District into a Jewish Autonomous Region in the Far Eastern Territory."

It is, however, necessary to record the fact that this high-spirited enterprise has, because of various unfavorable factors, achieved little success thus far. Despite the very substantial support provided for it by the Soviet Government, the results of Jewish colonization in Birobidjan, begun in 1928, have been meager. It is estimated—in the absence of exact figures—that at the beginning of 1940 there were in all some 20,000 Jews in the Jewish Autonomous Region (See pp. 62-68 in this volume).

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**DATES AND DOCUMENTS**  
**RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF ZIONISM**

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

- 1862—First Jewish colonization society for Palestine founded at Frankfort-on-the-Main, Germany
- 1862—Moses Hess, forerunner of the modern Zionist movement, published *Rom und Jerusalem*
- 1870—First Jewish agricultural school in Palestine, Mikveh Yisrael, founded by the Alliance Israélite Universelle
- 1878—Beginning of Jewish colonization in Palestine—First Jewish agricultural settlement, Petah Tikva, established
- 1881-1882—Rise of the Bilu movement. Beginning of planned immigration into Palestine (*First Aliyah*)
- 1882—The first Hovevei Zion group in the United States formed in New York
- 1882—Founding of the agricultural settlements Rishon le-Zion, Nes Ziona, Zikhron Yaakov and Rosh Pina
- 1882—Publication of Leon Pinsker's *Auto-Emancipation*
- 1884—Consolidation of the Hovevei Zion movement at the Katowice Convention
- 1886—*Ha-Tikvah* ("The Hope"), originally entitled *Tikvatenu* ("Our Hope"), is published in Jerusalem, in a book of N. H. Imber's Hebrew poems
- 1889—The Zionist order Bne Mosheh organized by Ahad Haam in Odessa (Russia)
- 1890—Establishment of the "Society for the Support of Jewish Farmers and Artisans in Syria and Palestine" (Odessa Committee)
- 1896—Theodor Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* ("The Jewish State") published
- 1897—First Zionist Congress held in Basel (Switzerland)—World Zionist Organization established and the Basel Program adopted
- 1898—First convention of the Federation of American Zionists held in New York
- 1900-1901—First Poale Zion groups formed
- 1901—Fifth Zionist Congress—The Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemet le-Yisrael) established
- 1903—Zionist Orthodox Organization, Mizrahi, founded
- 1903—Herzl presents the Uganda project at the Sixth Zionist Congress in Basel
- 1903—First Poale Zion organization founded in the United States of America
- 1904—Death of Theodor Herzl
- 1905—Jewish Territorial Organization (J.T.O.) formed
- 1905—Zionist Socialist Workers' Party founded
- 1906—Jewish Socialist Workers' Party founded
- 1906—Poale Zion Party founded in Russia
- 1907—World Poale Zion Party founded at The Hague, Holland
- 1909—Tel Aviv founded

- 1909-1910—Degania, first collective colony (kvutza), established in Palestine
- 1911—Tenth Zionist Congress in Basel approves the plan of co-operative colonies in Palestine
- 1912—Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of the United States of America, founded
- 1917—Balfour Declaration issued
- 1918—American Zionist Conference in Pittsburgh—All branches of the Federation of American Zionists merged into Zionist Organization of America (Z.O.A.)
- 1920—The Mandate for Palestine assigned to Great Britain by the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference
- 1920—London Zionist Conference established the Palestine Foundation fund (Keren ha-Yesod)
- 1920—Histadrut Haovdim (General Federation of Jewish Labor in Palestine) founded
- 1922—The Congress of the United States, by a joint resolution, approved by President Warren G. Harding, endorses the Balfour Declaration
- 1922—Hapoel Hamizrachi founded
- 1923—Death of Max Nordau
- 1923-1924—National Labor Committee for Palestine (Geverkshafte Campaign) founded
- 1924—First World Conference of Hashomer Hatzair
- 1925—Hebrew University in Jerusalem officially opened
- 1925—First World Conference of the Union of Zionist Revisionists
- 1927—Death of Ahad Haam
- 1929—Jewish Agency for Palestine formed
- 1930—Mapai, Palestine Labor Party (Mifleget Poale Erets Yisrael), founded
- 1936—Death of Nahum Sokolow
- 1937—Peel Report recommended partition of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish State
- 1939—Arab-Jewish Round Table Conference in London
- 1939—White Paper issued by the British Government
- 1944—Formation of a Jewish Brigade
- 1946—Anglo-American Commission formed to study the Palestine problem
- 1947—Special United Nations Commission for Palestine recommends by a majority vote the partition of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab State. The recommendation approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 29
- 1948—Great Britain gives up the Mandate for Palestine
- 1948—On May 14 the Jewish National Council proclaims in Tel Aviv the creation of the State of Israel, appointing a Provisional Government with Chaim Weizmann as President



# DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF ZIONISM

## MANIFESTO OF THE BILU, THE PIONEERS OF MODERN ZIONISM

TO OUR BRETHREN AND SISTERS IN THE EXILE, PEACE BE WITH YOU!

*"If I help not myself, who will help me?" (Hillel).*

"Nearly two thousand years have elapsed since, in an evil hour, after an heroic struggle, the glory of our Temple vanished in fire and our Kings and chieftains changed their crowns and diadems for the chains of exile. We lost our country, where dwelt our beloved sires. Into the Exile we took with us, of all our glories, only a spark of the fire, by which our Temple, the abode of our Great One, was engirdled, and this little spark kept us alive while the towers of our enemies crumbled to dust, and this spark leapt into celestial flame and shed light upon the faces of the heroes of our race and inspired them to endure the horrors of the Dance of Death and the tortures of the autos-da-fé. And this spark is now again kindling and will shine for us, a true pillar of fire going before us on the road to Zion, while behind us is a pillar of cloud, the pillar of oppression threatening to destroy us. Sleepest thou, O our nation? What hast thou been doing till 1882? Sleeping and dreaming the false dream of Assimilation. Now, thank God, thou art awakened from thy slothful slumber. The Pogroms have awakened thee from thy charmed sleep. Thine eyes are open to recognize the cloudy structure of delusive hopes. Canst thou listen silently to the flaunts and the mockery of thine enemies? Wilt thou yield before the might of . . . ? Where is thine ancient pride, thine olden spirit? Remember that thou wast a nation possessing a wise religion, a law, a constitution, a celestial Temple, whose wall is still a silent witness to the glories of the Past, that thy sons dwelt in Palaces and towers, and thy cities flourished in the splendour of civilization, while these enemies of thine dwelt like beasts in the muddy marshes of their dark woods. While thy children were clad in purple and fine linen they wore the rough skins of the wolf and the bear. Art thou not ashamed to submit to them?

"Hopeless is your state in the West; the star of your future is gleaming in the East. Deeply conscious of all this, and inspired by the true teaching of our great master Hillel: 'If I help not myself, who will help me?' we propose to build the following society for national ends:—

"1. The Society will be named *Bilu*, according to the motto: 'House of Jacob, come, let us go!' It will be divided into local branches according to the number of members.

"2. The seat of the Committee shall be Jerusalem.

"3. Donations and contributions shall be unfixed and unlimited.

"What we want:—

"1. A Home in our country. It was given to us by the mercy of God, it is ours as registered in the archives of history.

"2. To beg it of the Sultan himself, and if it be impossible to obtain this, to beg that at least we may be allowed to possess it as a state within a larger state; the internal administration to be ours, to have our civil and political rights, and to act with the Turkish Empire only in foreign affairs, so as to help our brother Ishmael in his time of need.

"We hope that the interests of our glorious nation will rouse the national spirit in rich and powerful men, and that everyone, rich or poor, will give his best labours to the holy cause.

"Greeting, dear brethren and sisters.

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one, and our Land, Zion, is our one hope.

"God be with us!"

*The Pioneers of Bilu.*

# THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

Foreign Office,

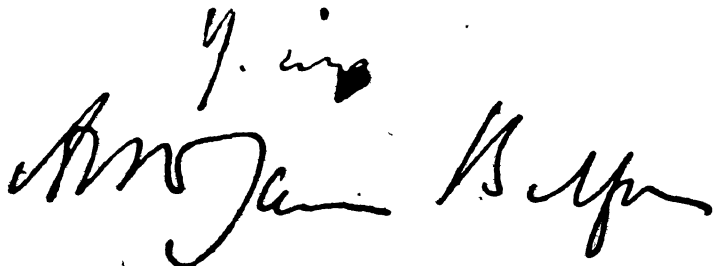
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'A. J. Balfour'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some ink blots.

(Facsimile)

# ZIONIST MANIFESTO

## ISSUED AFTER THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

### TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE

The 17th of *Marcheshvan*, 5678 (2nd November, 1917), is an important milestone on the road to our national future; it marks the end of an epoch, and it opens out the beginning of a new era. The Jewish people has but one other such day in its annals: the 28th August, 1897, the birthday of the New Zionist Organization at the first Basle Congress. But the analogy is incomplete, because the period which then began was Expectation, whereas the period which now begins is Fulfilment.

From then till now, for over twenty years, the Jewish people has been trying to find itself, to achieve a national resurrection. The advance-guard was the organized Zionist party, which in 1897 by its programme demanded a home for the Jewish people in Palestine secured by public law. A great deal was written, spoken, and done to get this demand recognized. The work was carried out by the Zionist Organization on a much greater scale and in a more systematic manner than had been possible for the *Chovevé Zion*, the first heralds of the national ideal, who had tried to give practical shape to the yearning which had burnt like a light in the Jewish spirit during two thousand years of exile and had flamed out at various periods in various forms. The *Chovevé Zion* had the greatest share in the practical colonization. The Zionist movement wrestled with its opponents and with itself. It collected means outside Palestine, and laboured with all its strength in Palestine. It founded institutions of all kinds for colonization in Palestine. That was a preface, full of hope and faith, full of experiments and illusions, inspired by a sacred and elevating ideal, and productive of many valuable and enduring results.

The time has come to cast the balance of the account. That chapter of propaganda and experiments is complete, and the glory of immortality rests upon it. But we must go further. To look back is the function of the historian; life looks forwards.

The turning-point is the Declaration of the British Government that they "view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object."

The progress which our idea has made is so colossal and so obvious that it is scarcely necessary to describe it in words. None the less, a few words must be addressed to the Jewish people, not so much by way of explanation, as to demand the new and greater efforts which are imperative.

The outstanding feature of the Declaration is, that what has been a beautiful ideal—and according to our opponents an empty dream—has now been given the possibility of becoming a reality. The aspirations of 1897 now find solid ground in the British Government's official Declaration of the 2nd November, 1917. That in itself is a gigantic step forward. The world's history, and particularly Jewish history, will not fail to inscribe in golden letters upon its bronze tablets that Great Britain, the shield of civilization, the country which is pre-eminent in colonization, the school of constitutionalism and freedom, has given us an official promise of support and help in the realization of our ideal of liberty in Palestine. And Great Britain will certainly carry with her the whole political world.

The Declaration of His Majesty's Government coincides with the triumphant march of the British Army in Palestine. The flag of Great Britain waves over Jerusalem and all Judea. It is at such a moment, while the army of Great Britain is taking possession of Palestine, that Mr. Balfour assures us that Great Britain will help us in the establishment of a National Home in Palestine. This is the beginning of the fulfilment.

To appreciate and to understand accurately is the first essential, but it is not all. It is necessary to go further, to determine what is the next step. This must be set forth in plain words.

The Declaration puts in the hands of the Jewish people the key to a new freedom and happiness. All depends on you, the Jewish people, and on you only. The Declaration is the threshold, from which you can place your foot upon holy ground. After eighteen hundred years of suffering your recompense is offered to you. You can come to your haven and your heritage, you can show that the noble blood of our race is still fresh in your veins. But to do that you must begin work anew, with new power and with new means—the ideas and the phrases and the methods of the first period no longer suffice. That would be an anachronism. We need new conceptions, new words, new acts. The methods of the period of realization cannot be the methods of the time of expectation.

In the first place, the whole Jewish people must now unite. Now that fulfilment is displacing expectation, that which was potential in the will of the Jewish people must become actual and reveal itself in strenuous labour. The whole Jewish people must come into the Zionist Organization.

Secondly, a word to our brothers in Palestine. The moment has come to lay the foundations of a national home. You are now under the protection of the British military authorities, who will guard your lives, your property, your freedom. Be worthy of that protection, and begin immediately to build the Jewish National Home upon sound foundations, thoroughly Hebrew, thoroughly national, thoroughly free and democratic. The beginning may decide all that follows.

Thirdly, our loyal acknowledgment of the support of Great Britain must be spontaneous and unmeasured. But it must be the acknowledgment of free men to a country which breeds and loves free men. We must show that what Great Britain has given us through her generosity, is ours by virtue of our intelligence, skill, and courage.

Fourthly, we must have ample means. The means of yesterday are ridiculously small compared with the needs of to-day. Propaganda, the study of practical problems, expeditions, the founding of new offices and commissions, negotiations, preparations for settlement, relief and reconstruction in Palestine—for all these, and other indispensable tasks, colossal material means are necessary, and necessary forthwith. Small and great, poor and rich, must rise to answer the call of this hour with the necessary personal sacrifice.

Fifthly, we need discipline and unity. This is no time for hair-splitting controversy. It is a time for action. We ask for confidence. Be united and tenacious, be quick but not impatient, be free men, but well-disciplined, firm as steel. From now onwards every gathering of Jews must have a practical aim, every speech must deal with a project, every thought must be a brick with which to build the National Home.

These are the directions for your work to-day.

Worn and weary through your two thousand years of wandering over desert and ocean, driven by every storm and carried on every wave, outcasts and refugees, you may now pass from the misery of exile to a secure home; a home where the Jewish spirit and the old Hebrew genius, which so long have hovered broken-winged over strange nests, can also find healing and be quickened into new life.

N. SOKOLOW

E. W. TSCHLENOW

CH. WEIZMANN

# LEAGUE OF NATIONS

## MANDATE FOR PALESTINE, JULY 24, 1922

The Council of the League of Nations:

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have agreed, for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, to entrust to a Mandatory selected by the said Powers the administration of the territory of Palestine, which formerly belonged to the Turkish Empire, within such boundaries as may be fixed by them; and

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have also agreed that the Mandatory should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2nd, 1917, by the Government of His Britannic Majesty, and adopted by the said Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country; and

Whereas recognition has thereby been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country; and

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have selected His Britannic Majesty as the Mandatory for Palestine; and,

Whereas the mandate in respect of Palestine has been formulated in the following terms and submitted to the Council of the League for approval; and

Whereas His Britannic Majesty has accepted the mandate in respect of Palestine and undertaken to exercise it on behalf of the League of Nations in conformity with the following provisions; and

Whereas by the afore-mentioned Article 22 (paragraph 8) it is provided that the degree of authority, control or administration to be exercised by the Mandatory, not having been previously agreed upon by the

Members of the League, shall be explicitly defined by the Council of the League of Nations;

Confirming the said mandate, defines its terms as follows:

### *Article 1*

The Mandatory shall have full powers of legislation and of administration, save as they may be limited by the terms of this mandate.

### *Article 2*

The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home, as laid down in the preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.

### *Article 3*

The Mandatory shall, so far as circumstances permit, encourage local autonomy.

### *Article 4*

An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognised as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and, subject always to the control of the Administration, to assist and take part in the development of the country.

The Zionist organisation, so long as its organisation and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognised as such agency. It shall take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty's Government to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home.

*Article 28*

In the event of the termination of the mandate hereby conferred upon the Mandatory, the Council of the League of Nations shall make such arrangements as may be deemed necessary for safeguarding in perpetuity, under guarantee of the League, the rights secured by Articles 13 and 14, and shall use its influence for securing, under the guarantee of the League, that the Government of Palestine will fully honour the financial obligations legitimately incurred

by the Administration of Palestine during the period of the mandate, including the rights of public servants to pensions or gratuities.

The present instrument shall be deposited in original in the archives of the League of Nations and certified copies shall be forwarded by the Secretary-General of the League of Nations to all Members of the League.

Done at London the twenty-fourth day of July, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-two.

*(Excerpts)*



RESOLUTION OF THE SIXTY-SEVENTH CONGRESS  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FAVORING THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF A JEWISH NATIONAL HOME

**Sixty-seventh Congress of the United States of America;**

**At the Second Session,**

Began and held at the City of Washington on Monday, the fifth day of December,  
one thousand nine hundred and twenty-one.

**JOINT RESOLUTION**

Favoring the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish  
people.

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States  
of America in Congress assembled, That the United States of America favors  
the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it  
being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the  
civil and religious rights of Christian and all other non-Jewish communities  
in Palestine, and that the holy places and religious buildings and sites in  
Palestine shall be adequately protected.*

*J. H. Cullen*

*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

*Albert A. Cullen*

*President of the Senate Pro Tempore.*

*Approved*

*September 21, 1922.*

*Wm. H. H. H.*

(Facsimile)

## PLAN OF PARTITION RECOMMENDED

### FOR PALESTINE BY THE PEEL COMMISSION, 1937

1. We return, then, to Partition as the only method we are able to propose for dealing with the root of the trouble.

2. At the time of our appointment, while the gravity of the situation in Palestine was to some extent, though not to its full extent, appreciated in this country, we think that the continuance of the Mandate was generally taken for granted, and our terms of reference implied the hope that we should be able to make recommendations which, if adopted, would in our opinion make it possible to bring about a lasting settlement without abandoning the Mandate. But, as our inquiry proceeded, we became more and more persuaded that, if the existing Mandate continued, there was little hope of lasting peace in Palestine, and at the end we were convinced that there was none. It was clear to us that only drastic methods of dealing with the problem offered any prospect of success and that one such method, very difficult though it evidently was, should not be regarded as impossible. In those circumstances we felt that we should be failing in our duty if we did no more than demonstrate, as we have tried to do in earlier chapters of this Report, that the situation in Palestine has reached a deadlock. We believe that Your Majesty's Government would wish us to submit to them any suggestions we may be in a position to make as to how that deadlock might possibly be overcome. It is true that the bulk of the evidence we have heard was not directly concerned with Partition, but in view of the fact that most of it was relevant, directly or indirectly, for forming a judgment on that issue, and in the light of other information we have obtained as to past and present conditions in Palestine, we feel justified in recommending that Your Majesty's Government should take the appropriate steps for the termination of the present Mandate on the basis of Partition.

3. While we do not think Your Majesty's Government would expect us to embark on the further protracted inquiry which would be needed for working out a scheme of Partition in full detail, it would be idle to put forward the principle of Partition and not to give it any concrete shape. Clearly we must show that an actual plan can be devised which meets the main requirements of the case. There seem to us to be three essential features of such a plan. It must be practicable. It must conform to our obligations. It must do justice to the Arabs and the Jews.

#### CONCLUSION

4. To both Arabs and Jews Partition offers a prospect—and we see no such prospect in any other policy—of obtaining the inestimable boon of peace. It is surely worth some sacrifice on both sides if the quarrel which the Mandate started could be ended with its termination. It is not a natural or old-standing feud. An able Arab exponent of the Arab case told us that the Arabs throughout their history have not only been free from anti-Jewish sentiment but have also shown that the spirit of compromise is deeply rooted in their life. And he went on to express his sympathy with the fate of the Jews in Europe. "There is no decent-minded person," he said, "who would not want to do everything humanly possible to relieve the distress of those persons," provided that it was "not at the cost of inflicting a corresponding distress on another people." Considering what the possibility of finding a refuge in Palestine means to many thousands of suffering Jews, we cannot believe that the "distress" occasioned by Partition, great as it would be, is more than Arab generosity can bear. And in this, as in so much else connected with Palestine, it is not only the peoples of that country that have to be considered. The

Jewish Problem is not the least of the many problems which are disturbing international relations at this critical time and obstructing the path to peace and prosperity. If the Arabs at some sacrifice could help to solve that problem, they would earn the gratitude not of the Jews alone but of all the Western World.

5. There was a time when Arab statesmen were willing to concede little Palestine to the Jews, provided that the rest of Arab Asia were free. That condition was not fulfilled then, but it is on the eve of fulfilment now. In less than three years' time all the wide Arab area outside Palestine between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean will be independent, and, if Partition is adopted, the greater part of Palestine will be independent too.

6. There is no need to stress the advantage to the British people of a settlement in Palestine. We are bound to honour to the utmost of our power the obligations we undertook in the exigencies of war towards

the Arabs and the Jews. When those obligations were incorporated in the Mandate, we did not fully realize the difficulties of the task it laid on us. We have tried to overcome them, not always with success. They have steadily become greater till now they seem almost insuperable. Partition offers a possibility of finding a way through them, a possibility of obtaining a final solution of the problem which does justice to the rights and aspirations of both the Arabs and the Jews and discharges the obligations we undertook towards them twenty years ago to the fullest extent that is practicable in the circumstances of the present time.

7. Nor is it only the British people, nor only the nations which conferred the Mandate or approved it, who are troubled by what has happened and is happening in Palestine. Numberless men and women all over the world would feel a sense of deep relief if somehow an end could be put to strife and bloodshed in a thrice hallowed land.

ALL OF WHICH WE HUMBLY SUBMIT FOR YOUR MAJESTY'S GRACIOUS  
CONSIDERATION.

J. M. MARTIN,  
Secretary.  
22nd June, 1937

PEEL.  
HORACE RUMBOLD.  
LAURIE HAMMOND.  
WM. MORRIS CARTER.  
HAROLD MORRIS.  
R. COUPLAND.

## THE BILTMORE PLATFORM

DECLARATION ADOPTED BY THE EXTRAORDINARY ZIONIST CONFERENCE  
AT HOTEL BILTMORE, NEW YORK (MAY 11, 1942)

1. The American Zionists assembled in this Extraordinary Conference reaffirm their unequivocal devotion to the cause of democratic freedom and international justice to which the people of the United States, allied with the other United Nations, have dedicated themselves, and give expression to their faith in the ultimate victory of humanity and justice over lawlessness and brute force.

2. This Conference offers a message of hope and encouragement to their fellow Jews in the Ghettos and concentration camps of Hitler-dominated Europe and prays that their hour of liberation may not be distant.

3. The Conference sends its warmest greetings to the Jewish Agency Executive in Jerusalem, to the Va'ad Leumi, and to the whole Yishuv in Palestine, and expresses its profound admiration for their steadfastness and achievements in the face of peril and great difficulties. The Jewish men and women in field and factory, and the thousands of Jewish soldiers of Palestine in the Near East who have acquitted themselves with honor and distinction in Greece, Ethiopia, Syria, Libya and on other battlefields, have shown themselves worthy of their people and ready to assume the rights and responsibilities of nationhood.

4. In our generation, and in particular in the course of the past twenty years, the Jewish people have awakened and transformed their ancient homeland; from 50,000 at the end of the last war their numbers increased to more than 500,000. They have made the waste places to bear fruit and the desert to blossom. Their pioneering achievements in agriculture and in industry, embodying new patterns of cooperative endeavor, have written a notable page in the history of colonization.

5. In the new values thus created, their Arab neighbors in Palestine have shared.

The Jewish people in its own work of national redemption welcomes the economic, agricultural and national development of the Arab peoples and states. The Conference reaffirms the stand previously adopted at Congresses of the World Zionist Organization, expressing the readiness and the desire of the Jewish people for full cooperation with their Arab neighbors.

6. The Conference calls for the fulfillment of the original purpose of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate which "*recognizing the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine*" was to afford them the opportunity, as stated by President Wilson, to found there a Jewish Commonwealth.

The Conference affirms its unalterable rejection of the White Paper of May, 1939, and denies its moral or legal validity. The White Paper seeks to limit, and in fact to nullify Jewish rights to immigration and settlement in Palestine, and, as stated by Mr. Winston Churchill in the House of Commons in May, 1939, constitutes "a breach and repudiation of the Balfour Declaration." The policy of the White Paper is cruel and indefensible in its denial of sanctuary to Jews fleeing from Nazi persecution; and at a time when Palestine has become a focal point in the war front of the United Nations, and Palestine Jewry must provide all available manpower for farm and factory and camp, it is in direct conflict with the interests of the allied war effort.

7. In the struggle against the forces of aggression and tyranny, of which Jews were the earliest victims, and which now menace the Jewish National Home, recognition must be given to the right of the Jews of Palestine to play their full part in the war effort and in the defense of their country, through a Jewish military force fighting under its own flag and under the high command of the United Nations.

8. The Conference declares that the new

world order that will follow victory cannot be established on foundations of peace, justice and equality, unless the problem of Jewish homelessness is finally solved.

The Conference urges that the gates of Palestine be opened; that the Jewish Agency be vested with control of immigration into Palestine and with the necessary

authority for upbuilding the country, including the development of its unoccupied and uncultivated lands; and that Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth integrated in the structure of the new democratic world.

Then and only then will the age-old wrong to the Jewish people be righted.

RESOLUTION ON PALESTINE ADOPTED BY THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS,  
NOVEMBER 29, 1947

181. (II). *Future government of Palestine*

*The General Assembly,*

*Having met* in special session at the request of the mandatory Power to constitute and instruct a special committee to prepare for the consideration of the question of the future government of Palestine at the second regular session;

*Having constituted* a Special Committee and instructed it to investigate all questions and issues relevant to the problem of Palestine, and to prepare proposals for the solution of the problem, and

*Having received and examined* the report of the Special Committee (document A/364) including a number of unanimous recommendations and a plan of partition with economic union approved by the majority of the Special Committee,

*Considers* that the present situation in Palestine is one which is likely to impair the general welfare and friendly relations among nations;

*Takes note* of the declaration by the mandatory Power that it plans to complete its evacuation of Palestine by 1 August 1948;

*Recommends* to the United Kingdom, as the mandatory Power for Palestine, and to all other Members of the United Nations the adoption and implementation, with regard to the future government of Palestine, of the Plan of Partition with Economic Union set out below;

*Requests* that

(a) The Security Council take the necessary measures as provided for in the plan for its implementation;

(b) The Security Council consider, if circumstances during the transitional period require such consideration, whether the situation in Palestine constitutes a threat to the peace. If it decides that such a threat exists, and in order to maintain international peace and security, the Security Council should supplement the authorization of the General Assembly by taking measures, under Articles 39 and 41 of the Charter, to empower the United Nations Commission, as provided in this resolution, to exercise in Palestine the functions which are assigned to it by this resolution;

(c) The Security Council determine as a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression, in accordance with Article 39 of the Charter, any attempt to alter by force the settlement envisaged by this resolution;

(d) The Trusteeship Council be informed of the responsibilities envisaged for it in this plan;

*Calls upon* the inhabitants of Palestine to take such steps as may be necessary on their part to put this plan into effect;

*Appeals* to all Governments and all peoples to refrain from taking any action which might hamper or delay the carrying out of these recommendations, and

*Authorizes* the Secretary-General to reimburse travel and subsistence expenses of the members of the Commission referred to in Part I, Section B, paragraph 1 below, on such basis and in such form as he may determine most appropriate in the circumstances, and to provide the Commission with the necessary staff to assist in carrying out the functions assigned to the Commission by the General Assembly.

## PLAN OF PARTITION WITH ECONOMIC UNION

## PART I

**Future constitution and government of  
Palestine****A. TERMINATION OF MANDATE,  
PARTITION AND INDEPENDENCE**

1. The Mandate for Palestine shall terminate as soon as possible but in any case not later than 1 August 1948.

2. The armed forces of the mandatory Power shall be progressively withdrawn from Palestine, the withdrawal to be completed as soon as possible but in any case not later than 1 August 1948.

The mandatory Power shall advise the Commission, as far in advance as possible, of its intention to terminate the Mandate and to evacuate each area.

The mandatory Power shall use its best endeavours to ensure that an area situated in the territory of the Jewish State, including a seaport and hinterland adequate to provide facilities for a substantial immigration, shall be evacuated at the earliest possible date and in any event not later than 1 February 1948.

3. Independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem, set forth in part III of this plan, shall come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the mandatory Power has been completed but in any case not later than 1 October 1948. The boundaries of the Arab State, the Jewish State, and the City of Jerusalem shall be as described in parts II and III below.

4. The period between the adoption by the General Assembly of its recommendation on the question of Palestine and the establishment of the independence of the Arab and Jewish States shall be a transitional period.

**D. ECONOMIC UNION AND  
TRANSIT**

1. The Provisional Council of Government of each State shall enter into an undertaking with respect to Economic Union and Transit. This undertaking shall be drafted by the Commission provided for in section B, paragraph 1, utilizing to the greatest possible extent the advice and co-operation of representative organizations and bodies from each of the proposed States. It shall contain provisions to establish the Economic Union of Palestine and provide for other matters of common interest. If by 1 April 1948 the Provisional Councils of Government have not entered into the undertaking, the undertaking shall be put into force by the Commission.

**F. ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP IN  
THE UNITED NATIONS**

When the independence of either the Arab or the Jewish State as envisaged in this plan has become effective and the declaration and undertaking, as envisaged in this plan, have been signed by either of them, sympathetic consideration should be given to its application for admission to membership in the United Nations in accordance with Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations.

## PART III

## CITY OF JERUSALEM

**A. SPECIAL REGIME**

The City of Jerusalem shall be established as a *corpus separatum* under a special international regime and shall be administered by the United Nations. The Trusteeship Council shall be designated to discharge the responsibilities of the Administering Authority on behalf of the United Nations.

**PROCLAMATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

THE OFFICIAL TEXTS IN HEBREW AND ENGLISH



# עדתך רשמי

עמ' 1

תל-אביב, ה' באייר תש"ח 14.5.1948

מס' 1

## הברזה על הקמת מדינת ישראל

בארץ-ישראל קם העם היהודי, בה עוצבה דמותו הרוחנית, הדתית והבדינית, בה חי חיי קוסמויות ממלכתיות, בה יצר נכסי תרבות לאומיים וכלל-אנושיים והוריש לעולם כולו את ספר הספרים הנצחי.

לאחר שהוגלה העם מארצו בכוח הזרוע שמר לה אמונים ככל ארצות פוזריו, ולא חדל מתפלה ומתקוה לשוב לארצו ולחדש בתוכה את הירותו המדינית.

מתוך קשר היסטורי ומסורתי זה התרו היהודים בכל דור לשוב ולהאחו במולדתם העתיקה; ובדורות האחרונים שבו לארצם בהמונים, וחלוצים, מעפילים ומגינים תפריחו נשמות, החיו שפתם העברית, בנו כפרים וערים, והקימו ישוב גדל והולך תשלים על משקו ותרבותו, שוחר שלום ומנן על עצמו, מביא ברכת הקידמה לכל תושבי הארץ ונושא נפשו לעצמאות ממלכתית.

בשנת תרנ"ז (1897) נתכנס הקונגרס הציוני לקול קריאתו של הוגה חזון המדינה היהודית תיאודור הרצל והכריז על זכות העם היהודי לתקומה לאומית בארצו.

זכות זו הוכרה בהצהרת בלפור מיום כ' בנובמבר 1917 ואושרה במנדט מטעם חבר הלאומים, אשר נתן במיוחד תוקף בין-לאומי לקשר ההיסטורי שבין העם היהודי לבין ארץ-ישראל ולזכות העם היהודי להקים מחדש את ביתו הלאומי.

השוואה שנתחוללה על עם ישראל בזמן האחרון, בה הוכרעו לסבך מיליונים יהודים באירופה, הוכיחה מחדש בעליל את התכרח בפתרון בעית העם היהודי מחוץ המולדת והעצמאות על ידי, הידוש המדינה היהודית בארץ-ישראל, אשר תפתח לרווחה את שערן המולדת לכל יהודי ותעניק לעם היהודי מעמד של אומה שוות-זכויות בתוך משפחת העמים.

שארית הפליטה שניצלה מהטבח הנאצי האיום באירופה ויהודי ארצות אחרות לא חדלו להעפיל לארץ-ישראל, על אף כל קושי, מניעה וסכנה, ולא פסקו לתבוע את זכותם לחיי כבוד, חירות ועמל-ישרים במולדת עמם.

במלחמת העולם השנייה תרם הישוב העברי בארץ את מלוא-חלקו למאבק האומות השוחרות חירות ושלום נגד כוחות הרשע הנאצי, וכדם חייליו ובמאמצו המלחמתי קנה לו את הזכות להמנות עם העמים מייסדי ברית האומות המאוחדות.

ב-29 בנובמבר 1947 קיבלה עצרת האומות המאוחדות החלטה המחייבת הקמת מדינה יהודית בארץ-ישראל, העצרת תבעה מאת תושבי ארץ-ישראל לאחו בעצמם בכל הצעדים הנדרשים מצדם הם לביצוע תהליכה. הכרה זו של האומות המאוחדות בזכות העם היהודי להקים את מדינתו אינה ניתנת להפקעה.

זוהי זכותו הטבעית של העם היהודי להיות ככל עם ועם עומד ברשות עצמו במדינתו הריבונית.

**לפיכך נתכנסנו, אנו חברי מועצת העם, נציגי הישוב העברי והתנועה הציונית, ביום סיום המנדט הבריטי על ארץ-ישראל, ובתוקף זכותנו הטבעית וההיסטורית ועל יסוד החלטת עצרת האומות המאוחדות אנו מכריזים בזאת על הקמת מדינת יהודית בארץ-ישראל, היא מדינת ישראל.**

**אנו קובעים** שתחל מרגע סיום המנדט, הלילה, אור ליום שבת ו' אייר תש"ח, 15 במאי 1948, ועד להקמת השלטונות הנבחרים והסדירים של המדינה בהתאם לחוקה שתיקבע על-ידי האספה המכוננת הנבחרת לא יאוחר מ-1 באוקטובר 1948 — תפעל מועצת העם כמועצת מדינת זמנית, ומוסד הביצוע שלה, מנהלת-העם, יהווה את הממשלה הזמנית של המדינה היהודית, אשר תיקרא בשם ישראל.

**מדינת ישראל** תהא פתוחה לעליה יהודית ולקיבוץ גלויות; תשקוד על פיתוח ארץ לטובת כל תושביה; תהא מושתתה על יסודות החירות, הצדק והשלום לאור חזונו של נביאי ישראל; תקיים שוויון זכויות חברתי ומדיני גמור לכל אזרחיה בלי הבדל דת, גזע ומין; תבטיח חופש דת, מצפון, לשון, חינוך ותרבות; תשמור על המקומות הקדושים של כל הדתות; ותחיה נאמנה לעקרונותיה של מנילת האומות המאוחדות.

**מדינת ישראל** תהא מוכנה לשתף פעולה עם המוסדות והנציגים של האומות המאוחדות בהגשמת החלטת העצרת מיום 29 בנובמבר 1947 ותפעל להקמת האחדות הכלכלית של ארץ-ישראל בשלמותה.

**אנו קוראים** לאומות המאוחדות לתת יד לעם היהודי בבנין מדינתו ולקבל את מדינת ישראל לתוך משפחת העמים.

**אנו קוראים** — גם בתוך התקפת-הדמים הנערכת עלינו זה חדשים — לבני העם הערבי תושבי מדינת ישראל לשמור על השלום וליפול חלקם בבנין המדינה על יסוד אזרחות מלאה ושווה ועל יסוד נציגות מתאימה בכל מוסדותיה, הזמניים והקבועים.

**אנו מושיטים** יד שלום ושכנות טובה לכל המדינות השכנות ועמיהן, וקוראים להם לשיתוף פעולה ועזרה הדדית עם העם העברי העצמאי בארצו. מדינת ישראל מוכנה לתרום חלקה במאמץ משותף לקידמת המזרח החיובי כולו.

**אנו קוראים** אל העם היהודי בכל התפוצות להתלכל סביב הישוב בעליה ובבנין ולעמוד לימינו במערכה הגדולה על הגשמת שאיפת הדורות לנאולת ישראל.

**מתוך במתון בצור ישראל הגנו חותמים בחתימת ידינו לעדות על הכרזה זו, במושב מועצת המדינה הזמנית, על ארמת המולדת, בעיר תל-אביב, היום הזה, ערב שבת, ה' אייר תש"ח, 14 במאי 1948.**

#### דוד בן-גוריון

דניאל אוסטר, מרדכי בנטוב, יצחק ברצבי, אליהו ברלין, פריץ ברנשטיין, הרב זולף גולד, מאיר גרנבוסקי, יצחק גרינבוים, דוד אברהם גרנבוסקי, אליהו דובקין, מאיר וילנר—קובנר, זרח ורהפטיג, הרצל ורדי, רחל כהן, הרב קלמן כהנא, סעדיה כובאשי, הרב יצחק מאיר לוי, מאיר דוד לוינשטיין, צבי לוריא, גולדה מאירסון, נחום ניר, צבי סגל, הרב יהודה ליב הכהן פישמן, דוד צבי פוקס, אהרן ציולינג, משה קולודני, אליעזר קפלן, אברהם קצנלסון, פליכס רזנבלוט, דוד רמז, ברל רפפורט, מרדכי שטנר, בן-ציון שטרנברג, בכור שיטריט, משה שמירא, משה שרתוק.

## PROCLAMATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and national identity was formed. Here they achieved independence and created a culture of national and universal significance. Here they wrote and gave the Bible to the world.

Exiled from Palestine, the Jewish people remained faithful to it in all the countries of their dispersion, never ceasing to pray and hope for their return and the restoration of their national freedom.

Impelled by this historic association, Jews strove throughout the centuries to go back to the land of their fathers and regain their Statehood. In recent decades they returned in their masses. They reclaimed the wilderness, revived their language, built cities and villages, and established a vigorous and ever-growing community, with its own economic and cultural life. They sought peace yet were prepared to defend themselves. They brought the blessings of progress to all inhabitants of the country.

In the year 1897 the First Zionist Congress, inspired by Theodor Herzl's vision of the Jewish State, proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national revival in their own country.

This right was acknowledged by the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, and reaffirmed by the Mandate of the League of Nations, which gave explicit international recognition to the historic connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and their right to reconstitute their national home.

The Nazi holocaust, which engulfed millions of Jews in Europe, proved anew the urgency of the reestablishment of the Jewish State, which would solve the problem of Jewish homelessness by opening the gates to all Jews and lifting the Jewish people to equality in the family of nations.

The survivors of the European catastrophe, as well as Jews from other lands, proclaiming their right to a life of dignity, freedom and labor, and undeterred by hazards, hardships and obstacles, have tried unceasingly to enter Palestine.

In the Second World War the Jewish people in Palestine made a full contribution in the struggle of the freedom-loving nations against the Nazi evil. The sacrifices of their soldiers and the efforts of their workers gained them title to rank with the peoples who founded the United Nations.

On November 29, 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a Resolution for the establishment of an independent Jewish State in Palestine, and called upon inhabitants of the country to take such steps as may be necessary on their part to put the plan into effect.

This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their independent state may not be revoked. It is, moreover, the self-evident right of the Jewish people to be a nation, like all other nations, in its own sovereign state.

*Accordingly, we, the members of the National Council, representing the Jewish people in Palestine and the Zionist movement of the world, met together in solemn assembly today, the day of the termination of the British Mandate for Palestine, and by virtue of the natural and historic right of the Jewish people and of the resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, hereby proclaim the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine, to be called Israel.*

We hereby declare that as from the termination of the Mandate at midnight, this night of the 14th to 15th May 1948, and until the setting up of the duly elected bodies of the State in accordance with a Constitution, to be drawn up by a Constituent Assembly not later than the first day of October 1948, the present National Council shall act as the Provisional State Council, and its executive organ, the National Administration, shall constitute the Provisional Government of the State of Israel.

The State of Israel will be open to the immigration of Jews from all countries of their dispersion; will promote the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; will be based on the precepts of liberty, justice and peace taught by the Hebrew Prophets; will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens, without distinction of race, creed or sex; will guarantee full freedom of conscience, worship, education and culture; will safeguard the sanctity and inviolability of the shrines and Holy Places of all religions; and will dedicate itself to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The State of Israel will be ready to cooperate with the organs and representatives of the United Nations in the implementation of the Resolution of the Assembly of November 29, 1947, and will take steps to bring about the Economic Union over the whole of Palestine.

We appeal to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building of its State and to admit Israel into the family of nations.

In the midst of wanton aggression, we yet call upon the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to return to the ways of peace and play their part in the development of the State, with full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its bodies and institutions, provisional or permanent.

We offer peace and amity to all the neighboring states and their peoples, and invite them to cooperate with the independent Jewish nation for the common good of all. The State of Israel is ready to contribute its full share to the peaceful progress and development of the Middle East.

Our call goes out to the Jewish people all over the world to rally to our side in the task of immigration and development and to stand by us in the great struggle for the fulfilment of the dream of generations—the redemption of Israel.

With trust in Almighty God, we set our hand to this Declaration, at this Session of the Provisional State Council, in the city of Tel Aviv, on this Sabbath eve, the fifth of Iyar, 5708, the fourteenth day of May, 1948.

## GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL PROVISIONAL COUNCIL

*President*—DR. CHAIM WEIZMANN

### CABINET

*Prime Minister and Minister of Defense*—DAVID BEN GURION

MOSHE SHERTOK

*Foreign Minister*

ELIEZER KAPLAN

*Minister of Finance*

ISAAC GRUENBAUM

*Minister of Interior*

MOSHE SHAPIRO

*Minister of Immigration*

ARON ZISLING

*Minister of Agriculture*

JUDA LEIB FISHMAN

*Minister of Religious Affairs,  
Reparations and War Damage*

FRITZ BERNSTEIN

*Minister of Trade and Industry*

BEHOR SHITRIT

*Minister of National Minorities*

FELIX ROSENBLUETH

*Minister of Justice*

MORDECAI BENTOV

*Minister of Labor and Public  
Works*

I. M. LEVIN

*Minister of Social Welfare*

DAVID REMEZ

*Minister of Communications*

# THE JEWISH SOCIALIST MOVEMENT IN RUSSIA AND POLAND

(FROM THE 1870'S TO THE FOUNDING OF THE BUND IN 1897)

Abraham Menes

## INTRODUCTION

- I. THE SOCIAL POSITION OF THE JEWISH WORKER
- II. SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS DEMOCRACY
- III. BEGINNINGS OF THE JEWISH LABOR MOVEMENT
- IV. THE SOCIALIST INTELLIGENTSIA
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- VI. THE EVE OF THE FOUNDING OF THE BUND

## INTRODUCTION

The Jewish socialist movement, which has played such a prominent role in Jewish life in the past fifty years, has always been more of an ideological than a political or social movement. The first attempts at socialist propaganda among Jewish workers were made in the 1870's, but the roots of Jewish socialism extend considerably beyond that date. In this respect there is great similarity between the Jewish socialist movement and Zionism, and it is no mere coincidence that the year 1897, in which the first Zionist Congress met at Basel, also saw the establishment of the Jewish Labor organization *Bund*, the first socialist party among the Jews.

Both Jewish socialism and Zionism gave expression to the age-old yearnings of the Jew for redemption. Although each was profoundly affected by the general social and national-political tendencies of the surrounding world they remained essentially Jewish movements, bound up with Jewish life and with the cherished traditions of Jewish history.

The Messianic-Utopian element in socialism appealed strongly to the Jewish intellectual and particularly to the workingman. In the course of generations the Jews had come to constitute a "proletarian nation," a people without a land or government of its own. In the socialist propaganda for a new world, built upon the foundations of truth, peace and justice, the Jewish worker heard an echo of the old Biblical prophecies of eternal peace, of the "End of Days," when, along with the redemption of the entire world, the people of Israel, too, would be redeemed.

At the same time, the Jewish socialist movement was always noted for its "realism"; it was a socialism of deed rather than of faith. This "realism" was characteristic of the Bund in Russia and Poland, and is even more characteristic of the Jewish socialist movement in Erets Yisrael today. To the members of the communal settlements in Palestine socialism has become a mode of daily life. This trait, too, Jewish socialism inherited from Jewish religious tradition, which was always a way of life rather than a doctrine of faith.

## I. THE SOCIAL POSITION OF THE JEWISH WORKER

In order to understand the unique character of the Jewish socialist movement it is necessary, first of all, to have some knowledge of the particular conditions under which the workers lived and in

which they carried on their struggle for social and economic justice. For tens of generations the Jews had been an urban people. Jewish life completely lacked the feudal traditions which left their particular impress on the development of Europe in general and of Eastern Europe in particular. Up to the very end of the nineteenth century Jewish life in the cities and small towns of Eastern Europe remained comparatively simple. The age-old inherited divisions into widely separated social classes that existed in the non-Jewish world were almost entirely unknown in the Jewish community. The bulk of the non-Jewish working population in Russia and Poland at that time consisted mainly of peasants or the descendants of peasants who had but recently been liberated from serfdom. Opposed to them was a very thin layer of the gentry that had dominated the entire political and social life of the country over a number of centuries. Both these extremes were practically absent in Jewish life. "All people have classes," remarks a prominent Jewish writer of the Haskalah period, "save the Jews. All Jews are the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Even so radical a Jewish writer as M. Olgin found it necessary to emphasize the fact that in the small Jewish town all the inhabitants were considered one family. Even the poorest always remained "a free man; poverty did not corrode his soul, did not break his spirit."

The regulations of the Halakah concerning the rights and duties of the worker were of the utmost importance in this regard. The relations between employer and employee were regulated in Jewish law on the basis of the ancient principle formulated in the Bible: The Jews must have no other master but God. "For unto me the children of Israel are servants; they are my servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus XXV, 55). Hence, the worker must not lose his personal freedom because of his status as a wage earner. The Halakah formulated this concept of freedom into the

principle that the worker has the permanent right to abandon his employment. The right of the worker to dispose of his own labor even after having contracted to work for a specified time is thus formulated in the *Shulhan Aruk*:

If a worker begins to work, and changes his mind at noon, he may quit. Even if he was paid in advance and cannot return the money to the employer, he still may quit and the money is considered as a debt, as it is said: "For unto me the children of Israel are servants, and not servants unto servants."

The legal regulation of working hours and rest-periods undoubtedly constitutes one of the most important social achievements of modern times. Up to the end of the nineteenth century, as we know, the doctrine of *laissez faire* prevailed. Even highly developed industrial countries limited the legal regulations of working conditions to a minimum. In the light of this it is noteworthy that Jewish tradition had introduced and put into effect a system of labor regulations, a rhythm of work and rest that rouses our admiration to this day.

According to Jewish law, the normal work-day for an employee is from sunrise to sunset. In practice, however, the limits of the work-day were conditioned by the hours of daily prayer. In many communities and guilds there were regulations forbidding the opening of stores and work-shops before morning services. Thus a regulation in the minute-book (*pinkos*) of the Tailors Guild in Lutsk (eighteenth century) reads: "Every member of our *Hevrah* must attend synagogue services twice daily. He who is unable to do so must pay a fine in ransom of his soul." Twice a day, in the morning and before sunset, the beadle would summon the people to services. The workmen would quit work a little before sunset in order to come to services on time.

The interval between the afternoon (*Minhah*) and the evening (*Maariv*) services was spent in the house of study and some of

the worshipers would engage in conversation with their friends during that period. Others—by far the larger number—would spend the time in study. Many artisans' guilds employed teachers to instruct their members between the *Minhah* and *Maariv* services. Thus, for example, Mendele Mocher Seforim tells us in his *Shloime Reb Hayims*: "At dusk, between the *Minhah* and *Maariv* services, artisans and other simple folk gather round the tables to listen to instruction—at one table there is a discourse on the *Midrash*, at another on *Ein Yaakob*, at a third on the Scriptures . . ." The apprentices, too, spent the interval between the *Minhah* and the *Maariv* services in the house of study.

It is hardly necessary to emphasize the significance of the Sabbath for the Jewish worker. The Sabbath rest was observed to a degree almost inconceivable to the modern man. On the Sabbath everyone rested: rich and poor, artisans and merchants, housewives and servants. Except for an emergency where a human life might be at stake, a Jew would not do any manner of work on the Sabbath. Artisans as a rule quit work on Friday afternoon, several hours before sunset, sometimes even at noon, and in some Jewish communities even stores would be closed long before sunset.

The annual holidays were especially important in connection with this pattern of work and rest, particularly in the case of Passover, which lasts eight days, and the Feast of Tabernacles which lasts nine days. On the intermediate days of the holidays, *hol ha-moed*, stores would remain open, but artisans abstained from work. For the workmen and apprentices these intermediate days with their semi-holiday atmosphere, had a special appeal. "Happy days are the *hol ha-moed* days. They are neither holiday nor workday . . . The tailor lays aside his scissors, the cobbler his awl, as if God had begun again to rain down manna from the heavens . . . And when these days arrive, the young apprentice dons his new suit, takes his *hol ha-moed* cane, the young girl, too, dons her new outfit, takes her

parasol, and they betake themselves for a visit to the next town" (Sholem Asch).

A fair idea of the rhythm of work and rest in the typical Jewish town of Eastern Europe can be gained from the following excerpts from the regulations of the artisans' guild, Poale Zedek, in Czortkow, in the eighteenth century:

No artisan may engage in his occupation prior to his attendance at morning service in the synagogue . . . whoever violates this regulation shall give one zloty to charity. Similarly, before the *Minhah* service . . . when the knock of the hammer on the door is heard, we must lay aside our work and go to the synagogue . . .

On New Moon days work is forbidden till the afternoon.

On *hol ha-moed* all manner of work is forbidden. Violators of this regulation will be fined seven Polish zlotys for the benefit of the synagogue.

We have undertaken not to do any manner of work on Fridays or on the eve of holidays after midday, unless it be of great necessity for the holiday, in which case it is permitted to complete the work in the afternoon, but under no circumstances later than the summons to the synagogue. Violators of this regulation will be fined four zlotys.

Jewish tradition has also indirectly served to regulate child labor to some extent. Every town had societies for the purpose of providing poor children with an education up to the completion of their thirteenth year (*Bar-Mitzvah*). The more promising among the pupils were even afforded an opportunity for advanced study in the yeshivah.

Because of these practices the Jewish workman suffered little, if at all, from a feeling of inferiority in his intercourse with the other members of the community. He received an elementary education in *heder*. On the Sabbath and the holidays he was a free man. In the interval between *Minhah* and *Maariv* he sat with his fellow



townsmen in the house of study. He felt himself an equal partner with all other Jews in the spiritual heritage of Israel. True, in the Jewish community, too, there were marked social cleavages between the rich and the poor, the scholar and the untutored. Even in the synagogue the prosperous member of the congregation occupied a more prominent position than the poor one. But there was absent that sharp gulf which divided the classes in the non-Jewish world.

There were often a number of scholars among the artisans. Furthermore, even the poorest man could hope that his son might become a scholar. Popular tradition has apotheosized the silent, simple workman who serves God by his hard labor and honest life. The world is sustained, tradition tells us, by the merits of Thirty-six holy men (the Lamed Vav Zaddikim) who remain undisclosed to the world and even to themselves. People believed that these saints were to be found primarily among the poor artisans and the village folk. And rightly so, for an uncommon measure of devotion and self-sacrifice was required of these people to live honestly and to fulfill their religious obligations. The following excerpts from the memoirs of Reuben Brainin, the well-known Jewish writer, will serve as an illustration:

My father was a poor tailor, a simple man, God-fearing and observant of the commandments. He was also a scholar of considerable attainment . . . He would make the rounds of the villages and the estates of the noblemen in search of work. And if he only found it, he would labor day and night, labor to exhaustion and to near-blindness. All those days that he was working in non-Jewish homes he did not eat a cooked meal, and subsisted on dry bread and water . . . In my father's house, in spite of crushing poverty, there was a large case full of books, which my father treasured as the apple of his eye.

## II. SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS DEMOCRACY

Jewish tradition never regarded the individual as the absolute and unrestricted owner of his possessions. The sole master of all possessions of the world, in the Jewish view, was the Lord of the Universe. This idea is given expression in the Biblical legislation that forbids the Jew to sell his patrimony. "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me" (Leviticus XXV, 23).

One's possessions are merely a trust given by God. As a trustee of God's possessions one must strictly fulfill His commandments relative to charity and the performance of good deeds. Hence, wealth was never regarded as an indication of personal achievement, just as poverty was not regarded as an indication of personal deficiencies. Jewish religious literature, beginning with the Prophets and the Psalms, frequently exalts poverty and the poor. The needy are identified with the pious and the just who fulfill the precepts of God and walk in His ways.

At the foundation of Jewish democracy lies the concept of the sanctity of human personality. Man was created in the image of God and in His likeness; hence, his life and his dignity are sacred. Even the sinner does not lose the image of God, and, therefore, even those condemned to death must not be unduly degraded: "And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day, for he that is hanged is a reproach unto God!" (Deuteronomy XXI, 22-23, translation according to Rashi). Degrading a man—Jewish tradition maintains—even if he has committed the gravest of offenses, is tantamount to blaspheming God, since man is created in God's image.

Jewish democracy was interested in spiritual rather than material values, in

the *olam ha-ba*, the world to come, rather than in *olam ha-zeh*, this world. The accepted principle was, "All Israel have a share in the world to come, as it is said, 'Thy people are all righteous.'"

The entire Jewish people is a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation." All Jews are under obligation to study the Torah, and all have an equal share in the privilege of performing meritorious deeds. After the destruction of the Temple the institution of the priesthood ended, to all intents and purposes; there was no longer an intermediary between God and the people. The rabbi occupies no privileged position in Jewish ritual; he is no more than an expert. Every adult Jew is qualified for a *minyan* (ten adult Jews required, as a quorum, for public worship), and even the simplest of Jews may conduct the service. The Jewish communities, therefore, had to provide at least an elementary education for all children. In the same spirit of enabling every Jew to fulfill the Commandments of the Torah, the community saw to it that every Jew was provided with matzot for Passover. In the same spirit, too, the community regarded it a sacred duty to help every Jewish girl to get married and raise a family.

It was considered one of the greatest *mitzvot* to pay the last respects to the deceased, particularly when there were no relatives to attend the funeral rites, and to perpetuate the memory of the departed. In the statutes of the various artisans' guilds and Societies for Study we find special regulations governing cases of members who died childless. In these cases the *Hevrah* arranged the funeral and saw to it that the *Kaddish* was recited and the memorial anniversary properly observed.

One of the most striking instances in this respect is the *shetar hitkashrut* (covenant) of an association of Kabbalists in Jerusalem in the second half of the eighteenth century. The members of this commune, which had the symbolic name *Ahabat Shalom* (Love of Peace), agreed to a communal and co-operative life both in this world and in the

world to come. They designated themselves "spiritual brothers in this and in the world to come." To make possible perfect fellowship they also resolved, "not to praise each other, even though praise is deserved . . . so that we all conduct ourselves as equals, without distinction or advantage." Of special interest is the obligation of each of the members "to exert himself to the utmost in the world to come" to save, perfect, and elevate the souls of his fellows.

The institution of the covenant, that is, the voluntary agreement between individuals or groups, forms one of the cardinal elements of Jewish democracy. In the Biblical conception even the relations between man and God are regulated by covenant. The first Covenant was made by God with Noah after the flood (Genesis IX): "And I will establish my covenant with you: neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood: neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth."

At the same time, the sanctity of life, and especially of human life, is proclaimed. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man." The relationship between God and the Jewish people is also based on the Covenant concluded at Mount Sinai (Exodus XIX-XXIV).

The democratic institution of the Covenant was in Biblical times closely linked with the people's assembly (See *The History of the Jews in Ancient Times*, Vol. I, pp. 101-103). Important elements of these old democratic traditions survived up to the beginning of the twentieth century and influenced, as we shall see later, the social development of modern Jewish life.

It may be of interest here to mention the fact that the Biblical concept of the covenant played a very prominent role in the Protestant theology of the seventeenth century, particularly in the United States. This covenant or federal theology, as it was termed, undoubtedly gave expression to the democratic trend of the time, which could no longer be entirely satisfied with the

rigorously authoritarian ethic of Calvinist theology.

The federal theology was essentially part of a universal tendency in European thought to change social relationship from status to contract . . . There can be no doubt that these theologians inserted the federal idea into the very substance of Divinity, that they changed the relation even of God to man from necessity to contract largely because contractualism was becoming increasingly congenial to the age and in particular to Puritanism. (Perry Miller, *The New England Mind*.)

Jewish tradition never established any sharp demarcations between the worldly and the religious sphere in life. The Jewish community was a "holy community," just as every Jewish *Hevrah* was a "holy society." The constitution of Jewry, the Torah, regulated the religious as well as the social and economic life of the individual Jew. A strict religious-ethical discipline was frequently called upon in Jewish life to make up for the lack of a normal governmental apparatus. This explains the extremely significant role occupied in Jewish life by such institutions as the oath (*shvueh*), the voluntary covenant, and the *herem* (excommunication). In the history of Jewish guilds we frequently encounter instances of their members gathering in the prayer house and taking a collective oath before the Scroll of the Law. The oath is at the same time the guarantee and the symbol of unity, brotherhood and discipline. It was natural, therefore, for the prayer house, the synagogue, to become the center of Jewish community life, and it is illuminating to the highest degree that even in the early part of the present century the radical and unbelieving socialists would often go to the synagogues to carry on their propaganda, since these were the sole places where the ordinary folk of the community would gather.

One of the most characteristic phenomena of Jewish democracy was the custom of *Ikkuv ha-Keriah*, or interrupting

the Reading of the Torah on the Sabbath. An individual with a grievance or with some complaint against another individual or even against the community as a whole, would come to the synagogue on the Sabbath to demand his rights. In the presence of God's Torah the weak would feel a greater measure of protection; in the prayer house he had the means and the opportunity of voicing his complaints before God and man. The aggrieved man had the right to forbid the congregation to take the Scroll out of the Ark until he had been promised that justice would be done, or until the individual who had injured him agreed to place the dispute before the rabbi or before a lay arbitrator. Not infrequently the rabbi of the community would himself take advantage of the right of *Ikkuv ha-Keriah* in order to compel the prosperous householders of the community to provide for the town's needy or for urgent charities, as, for example, for winter fuel for the homes of the poor, funds to provide matzot for the Passover, etc.

The custom of *Ikkuv ha-Keriah* had an enormous educational significance, and was, in a sense, a practical application of popular democracy. It is worthy of note that women took advantage of this practice even more often than men did. The well-known Zionist leader, Shmaryahu Levin, describes in his memoirs, in the chapter entitled "Cherneh the Widow," the operation of the custom of *Ikkuv ha-Keriah* in a typical small Jewish town of Tsarist Russia:

And Cherneh the widow was a force to be reckoned with in Swislowitz. . . . She was the most daring person in the town in the matter of interrupting the Reading of the Torah during the Sabbath services in the synagogue.

This immemorial privilege of the poor and the powerless was an extraordinary institution . . . The scene must be recalled in its fullness if we are to understand the force of the action. It is a Sabbath morning in the synagogue . . . The last of the regular prayers is said . . . and

the high officials of the synagogue make ready to bring out of the Ark the Scrolls of the Torah . . . And suddenly . . . suddenly a Jew appears in the pulpit where the Scrolls are to be laid down, delivers a resounding blow with one of the heavier prayer-books, and cries out at the top of his voice:

"I forbid the Reading."

The effect is electrical . . . The Jew in the pulpit waits and when the silence is complete he voices his complaint. He knows that he is secure. He is exercising an ancient privilege which it would be blasphemy to challenge.

Cherneh the widow was the most effective "interruptress" in the whole of our town. She seldom exploited the privilege on her own behalf. She spoke for others—and the congregation knew that Cherneh was *not* a person to be intimidated, interrupted or overridden. Once she had broken up the services she would keep them suspended until she had obtained satisfaction (translation by Maurice Samuel).

### III. BEGINNINGS OF THE JEWISH LABOR MOVEMENT

It was thus that the Jewish worker entered into the modern period with a substantial store of experience and tradition. There were cases when the newly-established and forward-looking proletarian organizations were the direct heirs of the older traditional artisans' guilds, which included employers as well as wage earners. At times the tendency to break away from these artisans' guilds originated among the workers; and there were cases when it was the employers who sought to abandon the general guilds, since it no longer suited them to be ranked with the workers.

How old is the modern Jewish labor movement? When were the first efforts made for the establishment of an independent labor organization? When did the Jewish workers begin their common struggle for social and economic advancement? It is

manifestly difficult to offer a precise answer to these questions. Such beginnings are lost—as is the case with all social phenomena—in the dim period of "prehistory." There can be no doubt, however, that the Jewish labor movement, along with the general labor movement, is closely bound up with the vast industrial revolution that took place in Europe in the course of the nineteenth century. In Russia the industrial revolution did not begin until the 1860's, when the abolition of serfdom (1861) and the rapid development of a net of railroads, in the course of a single generation, radically altered that nation's economy.

During the last four decades of the nineteenth century the number of workers in Russian industry increased more than three-fold. There was a phenomenal increase in the production of such basic materials as iron and coal. It was this rapid industrial development which, also affecting the Jewish Pale of Settlement, created the conditions for the emergence of a proletarian class and a socialist movement among the Jews of Eastern Europe. Accurate data concerning the numbers and occupational distribution of the Jewish working class are available only from the end of the nineteenth century. According to a survey conducted by the Jewish Colonization Association in the late nineties, the proletarian element comprised approximately 35 to 40 percent of the total Jewish population. The great bulk of the Jewish workers was concentrated in the traditional Jewish crafts, while a smaller portion consisted of unskilled laborers. However, thousands of Jewish workers had already found employment in the larger industrial establishments.

The earliest strike of Jewish workers, regarding which we have fairly reliable information, occurred in November 1871 in a Wilno tobacco factory. A contemporary report of the police authorities notes that the striking workers were recent arrivals from Southern Russia, where similar strikes had already taken place earlier. For the same

period we also possess information of a strike in a Bialystok tobacco factory, where the women workers demanded to be separated from the men workers by a special partition. Records have also been preserved of strikes by Jewish textile workers, mainly in the region of Bialystok. A series of strikes broke out in that city and its surrounding district during the years 1877-78. This was the period of the Russo-Turkish war, which brought a boom in the textile industry. "The factories reaped a golden harvest at that time" (*Razsviet*, 1880, No. 49), and this caused the workers to wage a determined struggle for better working conditions.

All of this information is of a purely incidental character, since for the most part the conflicts of that period, insofar as they affected the smaller Jewish workshops, passed unnoticed and went unrecorded. However, it is worthy of note that the first Jewish workers' strikes broke out spontaneously, uninfluenced by outside agitation. In the 1870's, the Jewish socialists had few ties with the Jewish workers, who were thus forced to rely on their own resources in finding the road toward unity and common action.

#### IV. THE SOCIALIST INTELLIGENTSIA

A long time passed before socialism became a movement of the masses. The earliest adherents and champions of the "new social order" were to be found not among the workers, but among the intellectuals. The internationalist and cosmopolitan aspect of socialism had a particularly strong attraction for the Jewish intellectual. Drawn rapidly into the general revolutionary movement, the Jewish socialists became gradually more estranged from Jewish life and their own people. Many of the socialist radicals even went so far as to deny the necessity for the existence of the Jewish people as a separate entity. At that time, socialism found itself in sharp opposition to everything that represented the "old

order": state, religion, family and national tradition. Hence the Jewish socialist intellectuals of the time could not even conceive the idea of a separate and independent Jewish socialist movement. In the prevailing view, such "national separatism" was in conflict with the principles of international socialism. For the revolutionary socialist the concept of double loyalty was intolerable. The Jewish socialist in particular, living and working in a non-Jewish milieu, was frequently faced with the tragic choice between loyalty to his own people and devotion to socialist principles.

There were, to be sure, some Jewish socialists who believed that the socialist idea implicitly obligated the Jew to abide by his people, sharing both its sorrows and hopes. Only in an order based on social justice, they contended, could there be a place for the Jews to live as a free people in a community of free peoples. The most important proponent of this idea was the socialist thinker Moses Hess (1812-1875), a close friend of Karl Marx, and an ideological forerunner of modern Zionism. Hess saw no contradiction between socialism and the Jewish struggle for national existence. He was, moreover, able to assess justly the great spiritual and social values inherent in Jewish tradition and religion. However, his book, *Rome and Jerusalem*, was at that time a voice in the wilderness. The socialist movement of the nineteenth century was not prepared for any such "heresy."

Even in Eastern Europe, where the Jewish masses lived under conditions of dire poverty and complete lack of civil rights, the great majority of Jewish revolutionary and socialist intellectuals cut their ties with their own people. In Russia there was an additional reason for this breach. In that country, where the urban economy was developed only to an insignificant degree, the problem of agrarian reform assumed a position of central importance. As a result, the Russian socialist movement took on the character of a peasant agrarian socialism. The radical Russian intelligentsia had before its eyes the image of the oppressed

peasant who had only recently been emancipated from serfdom, yet continued to live in want and poverty. The idealistic elements of the Russian intelligentsia were overwhelmed by a sense of guilt. Hence the rise of the remarkable *Narodnik* movement, with its slogan of "going to the people," of serving the people, of repaying the debt which the intelligentsia felt it owed the peasantry. In this way a special Russian type of socialism emerged, oriented not toward the city proletariat and the factory worker, but toward the Russian village and its primitive "commune" (*mir*). The revolution against Tsarism, contended the *Narodnik* ideologists, would lead directly to socialism in Russia, bypassing the intermediate stage of capitalism. This folk socialism remained the dominant ideology of the Russian intelligentsia over a period of two decades.

The Jewish intelligentsia, insofar as it was socialist, found itself linked by circumstances, both ideologically and practically, with the Russian revolutionary movement. "Going to the people" assumed a specific

meaning for the Jewish intellectual; it did not mean approaching the destitute Jewish masses, but establishing a link with the Russian peasant. Since, according to the *Narodnik* ideology, the Jewish community lacked the mainstay of socialism—the peasant and his "innate" primitive communism—it could not be fertile soil for socialist activity. The prevailing socialist ideology thus resulted in debarring the Jewish intellectual from working in a Jewish milieu. Nevertheless, there were some attempts even during the 1870's to conduct propaganda among the Jewish youth. Some Jewish revolutionaries, among whom Aaron S. Lieberman was the most prominent, even cherished plans of creating a widespread Jewish socialist organization.

The cradle of the modern socialist movement among Jews was Wilno. At the beginning of the 1870's Aaron Zundelevich, later a member of the famous Executive Committee of *Narodnaya Volya* (The People's Will), founded a revolutionary group, consisting almost wholly of the students of the Jewish Teachers' Institute in Wilno. One of the most active members of this group was Aaron S. Lieberman. In June 1875 the Wilno group was dissolved. The administration of the Teachers' Institute and the police authorities discovered the underground activities carried on both inside and outside the walls of the institute. Zundelevich and Lieberman were forced to flee abroad where they soon resumed their revolutionary activities.

Meanwhile, underground propaganda activity continued in Wilno. A new revolutionary group was formed in the fall of 1875 under the leadership of Leib Davidovich. This group was in contact with similar groups in Grodno, Minsk, Dvinsk and Yeletz.

Aaron S. Lieberman continued to maintain close relations with the Jewish revolutionary groups in Russia. An appeal in Hebrew, which he addressed to the Jewish youth, was distributed among the *Haskalah* intelligentsia and the yeshivah students. Lieberman was also the author of a pam-



AARON S. LIEBERMAN, STANDING (1844-1880),  
AND AARON ZUNDELEVICH (1854-1923)

phlet, entitled *On the Organization of a Social Revolutionary Federation Among the Jews of Russia*. On the whole, Lieberman was the heart and soul of every effort in the field of socialist propaganda and organization among the Jews during the 1870's. In Berlin, in 1875, he made an attempt to establish a "Jewish Socialist Section of the International." Shortly thereafter he departed for London where a considerable number of Jewish workers from Eastern Europe had already settled. In London Lieberman founded the first Jewish socialist organization, the *Agudat ha-Sozialistim ha-Ivrim be-London* (the Union of Jewish Socialists in London).

The statutes and rules of the *Agudat ha-Sozialistim* were drafted in both Yiddish and Hebrew. This first attempt at an independent Jewish socialist organization fell short of success. The *Agudat ha-Sozialistim* failed to evoke any marked response from the Jewish workers, but provoked the strong opposition of conservative Jewish circles in London. In addition it suffered from sharp internal friction which led to its early disintegration.

Lieberman then left London for Vienna, where, with the aid of a group of Jewish socialists, he established the first socialist paper in Hebrew, *Ha-Emet* (May 1877). Among those who collaborated with Lieberman on *Ha-Emet* were Leiser Zuckerman, Isaac Kaminer and Judah Leib Lewin. Of the three issues which appeared, the first two were permitted legal circulation by the Russian authorities, but the third was confiscated. Immediately thereafter, Morris Vinchevsky and Aaron V. Rabinovich began publishing, in October 1877, a new socialist magazine in Hebrew, *Asefat Hakamim*. Of this periodical, only eight issues were published. In October 1878, when the "Socialist Law" prohibiting socialist activities was promulgated in Germany, Vinchevsky was arrested.

## V. THE EIGHTIES

Toward the end of the 70's, there came a radical change in the economic situation in

Russia that took on the form of a long-lasting depression. The economic crisis that had broken out in Western Europe a few years after the Franco-Prussian war led to a collapse in prices of agricultural products on the world market. This naturally had an immediate effect in a country, such as Russia was, where the export of grain still played a dominant role in its economic structure.

The anti-Semitic movement that swept into Russia from Western Europe, along with the economic crisis, assumed the form of bloody pogroms, and violently disturbed the Jewish community in general and the Jewish socialist intelligentsia in particular. The belief that the revolutionary movement would automatically bring a solution to the Jewish problem was shattered, and an intense national feeling seized large sections of the Jewish socialist youth.

The mood of the time found its classical expression in Leo Pinsker's *Auto-Emancipation*. The central idea of this work was indicated by the author when he chose as its motto Hillel's saying: "If I do not help myself, who will help me?" It was Pinsker's view that the Jews could no longer rely merely on the good will of the outside world. The time had come for them to take their destiny into their own hands. One section of the Jewish youth, the *Bilu* pioneers, directed their gaze to the land of their forefathers, to Erets Yisrael. Another group which symbolically designated itself *Am Olam*, The Eternal People, also sought for a solution of the Jewish problem in emigration. But these pioneers held that the Jewish people could develop a new way of life only in the New World. The *Am Olam* group, which included a considerable number of the socialist minded, set themselves yet another goal. "We Jews," stated one of the *Am Olam* founders, "gave the world its supreme moral values . . . it may be that it is our present destiny to show how to build a social order based on truth and justice."

The moral qualms in the ranks of the Jewish socialist intellectuals were particu-

larly intense because a number of leaders of the Russian revolutionary movement adopted an indulgent attitude toward the pogroms and interpreted these outbreaks as the first signs of a great peasant uprising against the entire social and political order in Russia. A substantial section of the Jewish revolutionary youth abandoned socialism and "returned to their people." But even those whose faith in socialism remained unshaken began to realize the existence of a Jewish problem. These events marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of socialist thought among the Jews. Jewish socialists were confronted with the additional task of finding a solution to the Jewish problem.

Moreover, a new external development contributed toward a change in the socialist activities among the Jews. In the late 1870's and early 1880's, the *Narodnaya Volya* had the ascendancy in the minds of the revolutionary youth of Russia. Gradually, however, the ideas of Marxian Socialism, with emphasis shifted from the peasant to the industrial worker, came strongly to the fore. This opened up new possibilities for socialist activity among the Jewish proletarian class, and resulted in the development of closer ties between the socialist intelligentsia and the Jewish worker.

Even before the pogroms, a group of Jewish socialists in Geneva had, in the summer of 1880, issued an appeal in Russian, signed by "a group of socialist Jews." This appeal pointed to the necessity of conducting propaganda in Yiddish, and criticized the attitude of many Jewish intellectuals who "try to forget the Jewish language—unnatural as that may be—and even their own origin." The signers declared: "Such an attitude on the part of the Jewish revolutionary youth can no longer be tolerated." It appears that the appeal did not reach Russia nor did it evoke the expected response in other countries.

In Russia itself, small revolutionary groups were formed in a number of localities in the Jewish Pale. Of special significance were the socialist circles in Minsk and

Wilno which comprised a considerable number of working people, both men and women.

The activities of the revolutionary group in Minsk, in 1883, comprising about 150 men and women workers, were directed by Yefim (Moshe) Churgin. In the summer of 1884, independently of Churgin, revolutionary propaganda was conducted among the Jewish workers by the student Emil Abramovich, one of the noblest figures among the pioneers of Jewish socialism. Others among those who took a leading part in Minsk revolutionary activities were Isaac A. Hourwich and his sister Zhenya. By the end of the 1880's, however, the groups in Minsk had practically disintegrated. Arrests took away a number of the active workers, and the most important leaders, Emil Abramovich and Isaac A. Hourwich, were forced to leave Minsk.

There are also records of revolutionary activities in Wilno during the 1880's. Among the revolutionary workers during that time were several who had already participated in the first socialist groups in Wilno during the seventies. The leading role, however, was assumed by a group of younger people, which included such subsequently well known socialist leaders as Leo Jogiches (Tishko) and Charles Rapoport. The revolutionists in Wilno occupied themselves principally with organizing the transport of revolutionary literature printed abroad. Ever since the time of Zundeleovich Wilno had played an important role as a transmission center for illegal literature, and the Wilno socialist intelligentsia was, therefore, in close contact with the leading Russian revolutionists abroad, as well as with various groups within Russia. From the very beginning the Wilno Jewish socialists were notable for their larger outlook and far-reaching aspirations. The great cultural tradition of Wilno, the "Jerusalem of Lithuania," contributed significantly to the leading role which the Wilno revolutionists played in the development of the Jewish socialist and revolutionary movement.



## VI. THE EVE OF THE FOUNDING OF THE BUND

The decade 1887-1897 constitutes quite a distinct period. The socialist propaganda activities of that time in Wilno and other cities were notable both for their scope and continuity. Up to the late eighties these activities had been of a sporadic character; later, however, there began a period of sustained, organic development. This period, which we may designate as the "eve of the founding of the Bund," witnessed the transformation of the revolutionary propaganda activity of limited socialist circles into a mass movement among the Jewish proletariat.

The clouds of the prolonged economic depression which had darkened the eighties were now gradually lifting. In 1888 there was a slight improvement. In 1891 the depression became acute again, but in 1893 a sharp upswing in the Russian economy began. It became clear to everyone that Russia, too, was following the path of capitalistic development. As a result, the basis for a socialist movement in Russia along Western European lines was laid, and the spiritual as well as the material foundations for an independent Jewish socialist movement were now firmly established.

At the end of the 1880's a number of Jewish socialists had arrived at the conclusion that there was little that could be done for the Jewish workers in Russia itself. Isaac A. Hourwich said at the time: "The only solution for the Jewish worker lies in emigration to America." But later the situation was radically changed. The Jewish proletariat grew in numbers and the economic upsurge opened up new perspectives for the individual worker as well as for the Jewish working class as a whole. Beginning in 1893 a successful strike movement swept over a number of towns within the Jewish Pale. The Jewish proletariat developed greater faith and confidence in its own powers. Optimism became the prevailing mood among the Jewish socialists in the 1890's.

The central group which directed the

revolutionary work in Wilno during that time, known as the group of Jewish Social Democrats, consisted of Z. Kopelson (Timofei), I. Aisenstadt (Yudin), A. Kremer (Arkady), Pati Srednitsky (Kremer's wife), Liuba Aisenstadt Levinson, J. Mill (John), S. Gozhansky, Nahum Levinson (V. Kosovsky) and Abram Mutnik (Gleb). From the very beginning the founders of the Group of Jewish Social Democrats assumed the responsibilities of their "historic mission." Wilno became the center of socialist activity for the entire Jewish region. It organized the activities in Warsaw, Minsk, Smorgon, Bialystok and other localities. In addition, it established contacts with the revolutionary groups in several important Russian centers such as Odessa, Kiev, Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The "turning point," as it was called, in the history of the Jewish labor movement, occurred in the years 1893-1895. The propaganda work of the revolutionary circles was conducted at the time in Russian. General education and socialist propaganda went hand in hand. The propaganda in Russian, however, had a serious drawback. The workers who had managed to achieve a higher level of education and culture were for that very reason estranged from the Jewish masses. The leaders clearly realized that the old propaganda methods inherited from the Haskalah period could no longer be applied, and that in order to evoke the interest of the average worker it was necessary to go over to socialist agitation on the basis of everyday needs. The economic revival made possible a systematic struggle for practical demands, that is, for a shorter working day and higher wages. These new tactics were the result of the changed economic situation. It was greatly to the credit of the Wilno leadership that they so early recognized the new situation and incorporated the necessary changes in their socialist activities.

With the adoption of the new tactics a widespread strike movement was initiated among the Jewish workers of Wilno and other centers for a twelve-hour day (in-

cluding two hours for breakfast and lunch). The workers based these demands on an old, long forgotten Russian decree of 1785 that limited the working day in the artisans' shops to twelve hours.

These new tactics, successfully tested in Wilno, had a great influence on the development of the socialist movement in all of Russia. For the Russian socialist groups, however, the question was solely one of tactics, whereas for the Jewish socialists it was an issue of fundamental and far-reaching significance. With the switch from propaganda to agitation came the transition from Russian to Yiddish as the language of revolutionary work. This transition spelled the birth of an independent Jewish labor movement, because the change obviously necessitated the formation of special Jewish organizations, the development of a Yiddish revolutionary literature and, in connection therewith, a cultural movement in Yiddish.

The transition from Russian to Yiddish aroused strong opposition among many of the active workers for whom participation in revolutionary circles was also often the road to individual advancement. Disregarding this opposition, which at times took on acute forms, the new strategy demonstrated its efficacy by the end of 1895. The period of mere propaganda work among small groups was ended. The number of organized workers increased greatly, and with the new arrivals a fresh spirit permeated socialist activity. The movement assumed more of a folk quality and became more distinctly Jewish in character.

On the day following the May First celebration, in 1895, a meeting of the most active members of the revolutionary movement listened to a report on "The Theoretical and Practical Achievements of the Movement During the Past Year." The report, delivered by Julius Martov, stressed three important consequences of the tactics—the movement had become more democratic, more practical, and more Jewish-minded. The necessity for an independent Jewish labor party was unequivocally

voiced for the first time at this historic meeting.

The Jewish labor movement expanded rapidly. By the end of 1895 there were already in Wilno 27 organized trades. In 1897 there were underground revolutionary groups and labor organizations in all the larger Jewish towns in Lithuania and White Russia. In Poland, too, the Jewish labor organizations that were founded in Warsaw and Lodz established contact with the group in Wilno.

The growth of the Jewish labor movement in the years 1893-1897 strongly stimulated the output of Jewish revolutionary literature. Socialist and revolutionary pamphlets had previously been smuggled in from abroad and distributed among the Jewish workers. However, with the new emphasis on agitation, the need was felt for literature better adapted to the requirements of the Jewish workers in Russia. This was begun with the distribution of handwritten pamphlets which were passed on from hand to hand. Later on the handwritten pamphlets were supplemented by the output of a small hectograph. Also many revolutionary pamphlets were printed abroad and smuggled into Russia.

The Wilno leaders supported all efforts which were being made to create a suitable literature of enlightenment in Yiddish. Special mention should be made of Y. L. Peretz's *Yomtev Bletlech* which found a quick response in Jewish radical circles. The first number, *Lekoved Pesah*, was issued in 1894. In addition to Peretz, David Pinski, Mordecai Spector and others contributed to the *Yomtev Bletlech*.

In December 1896 there appeared the first number of *Der Yidisher Arbeter*, a Socialist periodical written in Yiddish and printed abroad, which played a significant role in the history of Jewish socialist thought. An even greater accomplishment was the publication of the *Arbeter Shtime*, forty numbers of which were published between August 1897 and September 1905. The first numbers of the *Arbeter Shtime* were privately issued by several active mem-

bers of the "Group of Jewish Social Democrats" and printed illegally in Wilno itself. With the founding of the Bund, the *Arbeter Shtime* became the central organ of the Bundist party.

An important element in socialist cultural activity was the revolutionary song. The authors of the socialist songs were closer to the folk life and to Jewish tradition than most of the ideological leaders. In the nineties there were popular in Russia songs composed by Jewish revolutionary writers in America (such as David Edelstadt, Morris Vinchevsky, Morris Rosenfeld) as well as songs composed on the spot, often by unknown authors. The poems of the young Abraham Walt (A. Liesin) enjoyed great popularity, and were distributed in handwritten copies in many towns. It was in these songs that the Jewish worker's life and aspirations were mirrored, as a rule, more faithfully than in the propaganda literature. The anthem of the Bund *Di Shvueh* ("Oath"), was particularly characteristic in this respect. We have already indicated the prominent role that the voluntary covenant and the oath played in Jewish life. Among Jewish associations there was an old custom of confirming important decisions by taking a collective oath. And it is highly instructive that in the history of the Jewish labor movement from its very inception the oath occupies a prominent place. A report from Krinki

(1897) contains the following account of a clandestine meeting of 300 striking workers outside of the city: "Rain began to fall, and they stood in the downpour for more than two hours. Each swore by a pair of *tefillin* (phylacteries) that he would stand firmly by what had been agreed upon. All chanted the 'Oath.' Some threw themselves to the ground and wept—whether for joy or sorrow I do not know; to strike is no light matter for such oppressed people."

The older variant of *Di Shvueh* began with the words: "Sacred is Nature." This was a concession to the anti-religious revolutionists who replaced God with Nature. The meetings used to open with the singing of the "Oath", and frequently it was also sung at the close. The workers would join hands and form a circle around the red flag of revolution. In 1902 the well-known Yiddish writer S. An-ski wrote a new text for the "Oath" which more clearly expressed the folk-sentiment, the melody was also changed. The custom of singing *Di Shvueh* has remained deeply rooted in the Jewish labor movement.

By degrees the Jewish socialist intelligentsia found its way to the Jewish people. Owing to the amalgamation of these two elements, the intelligentsia and the working people, the foundation was laid for the establishment of the first independent Jewish socialist party, the General Jewish Workers' Union—the Bund.

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# THE JEWISH SOCIALIST MOVEMENT IN RUSSIA AND POLAND (1897-1919)

Raphael R. Abramovitch

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## I. THE BUND (1897-1906)

### 1. BIRTH OF THE BUND

The Bund which was to become, for almost half a century, the leading Jewish Socialist party, was founded at a conference in Wilno, in September 1897. Thirteen delegates representing local organizations, trade unions and clandestine periodicals (*Arbeter Shitime* and *Yidisher Arbeter*, cf. above p. 367), assembled in a small wooden suburban house near Wilno. Composed of eleven men and two women—five intellectuals and eight manual workers—they represented the major socialist groups of Warsaw, Wilno, Bialystok, Pinsk and Bobruisk. Many of these men and women were to become leaders of the movement: Aaron Kremer, a student of technology who, under

the name of "Arkady," achieved recognition as the movement's spiritual leader; Nahum Levinson, an intellectual from Kovno who, as "Vladimir" and "Kosovsky," later became a leading Bund theoretician, writer and editor; Joseph Mill ("John") and Abraham Mutnik ("Gleb")—leading members of the "Committee Abroad" of the Bund in Geneva; David Katz ("Taras"), one of the most active and resourceful activists in the 1900's and a friend of Maxim Gorky; Leon Goldman, one of the three Goldman brothers who were to gain prominence in the general Social Democratic movement of Russia.

The "founding fathers" of the Bund were conscious of the tremendous task they had undertaken. They were inspired by the example of Ferdinand Lassalle, the Jewish founder of the German socialist labor party; in fact, it was his "Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterbund" that furnished them with the idea of naming their own organization "Der algemeiner yidisher arbeterbund in Rusland un Poiln" (General Jewish Workers' Union in Russia and Poland), commonly known as the Bund (in later years Lithuania was added to the official name).

The founders of the Bund aimed at the creation of an organization of the Jewish proletariat which would form both an organic part of the general revolutionary movement in Russia and also, at the same time, represent the specific interests and demands of the Jewish workers and population. The ideology and activities of the



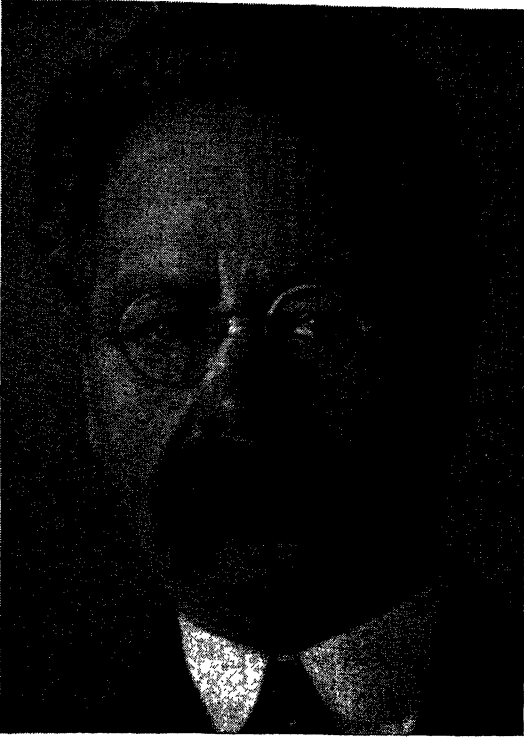
THE HOUSE WHERE THE FIRST CONVENTION  
OF THE BUND WAS HELD (WILNO, 1897)

Bund were dedicated to a harmonious synthesis of universal socialist ideals with the specific needs and aspirations of the Jewish people. It did in fact succeed in becoming a mass organization and in mobilizing, on occasion, hundreds of thousands of followers and sympathizers. Thus the founding of the Bund marked a new departure in the history of the Jewish struggle for individual, social and national emancipation.

The founding of the Bund deeply impressed the clandestine circles of Jewish Socialists throughout the Pale. The organization soon began to grow at a remarkable pace and applications for affiliation began to pour in from other cities. The impact of the new organization—the first of its kind in Russia not only among Jews but among non-Jewish Marxian Socialists as well—was inspiring. In March 1898, there was held

the first congress of the All-Russian Social Democratic Labor Party which the Bund helped to found, and three of the delegates to this congress (Kremer, Mutnik and Taras-Katz) represented the Bund, which was admitted to the new party as an “autonomous part.”

Unfortunately, the Tsarist government responded to the challenge of the Bund and of the Social Democratic Party with an unparalleled intensification of police repression. The *Okhrana* (the Tsarist Secret Police), which shortly before had been “modernized” and reorganized under the leadership of Zubatov, a repenting revolutionist, instituted a new shadowing technique, employing imported spies from Moscow who were unknown even to the local police. The climax came in the summer of 1898 with a smashing attack on the



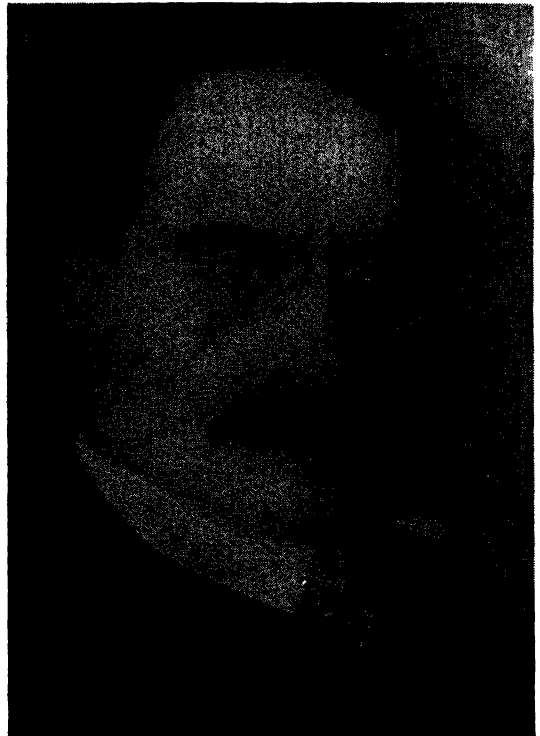
AARON KREMER-ARKADY (1865-1935)

key organizations of the Bund in Minsk, Wilno and Bobruisk. Even the carefully camouflaged printing shop of the *Arbeter Shtime*, equipped with a noiseless hand-press specially designed by Kaplinsky, was discovered and seized together with freshly printed copies of the latest issue. Hundreds of leaders and members of the Bund were arrested. A few selected leaders were taken to Moscow, where Zubatov, the *Okhrana* chief, sought to "convert" them in the course of long personal interviews. This was part of a plan intended to demoralize the forces of the Revolution—a plan which was to backfire.

But hard as this blow was for the Bund, it did not vitally impair the new organization. The few remaining leaders—among them the energetic Taras—succeeded in rebuilding the local organizations. Within several weeks, a new printing shop was set up, and the *Arbeter Shtime* reappeared. Two months after the wave of arrests the second convention of the Bund was held in Kovno (autumn, 1898); it had already

grown too strong to be liquidated by simple police measures. Its strength lay in the support it received from the special trade groups (*kasses*) which the Bundists managed to establish. A *kasse* was the embryo of a union combined with a mutual aid society. The workers of a certain trade would make small weekly or monthly payments into a general fund to be used by the members in the event of strikes, conflicts, or other emergencies. Dues were collected by an elected treasurer and a few trusted comrades. In a way, this small committee was also responsible for the general condition of the trade and maintained contacts with almost every allied shop, however small. (The Jewish workers of the time worked mostly in small shops or even as apprentices of individual artisans.)

This tended to make the Bund more "practical-minded" and brought it into closer touch with the economic needs of the workers. This does not mean that the Bund shared the theoretical concept of the ultra-Marxist "Economism." (*Economism* main-



V. KOSOVSKY (1870-1941)

tained that the class-conscience of the proletariat developed by stages beginning with a purely economic struggle and only later emerged as revolutionary political action.) The problem was frankly dealt with at the fourth party convention in April 1901, where the following resolution was adopted in regard to strikes: (1) the strike movement is to be directed principally at those trades which have not yet been affected or in which obsolete and bad working conditions prevail; (2) in those trades where some improvement of working conditions has been achieved, and where a measure of political and class-consciousness has been awakened, caution is to be observed before calling a strike.

In the period of reaction which followed 1905, it was frequently charged that by its unbridled "terrorist" economic struggle the Bund had ruined the Jewish trades and was indirectly responsible for reducing the Jewish people to a state of economic degradation. On the whole, this accusation was unfounded, though it was true that the Jewish workers were employed exclusively in Jewish-owned enterprises and many small shops that found themselves unable to keep pace with the rising wage-standard endorsed by the Bund. By and large, only a few enterprises were thus eliminated, and the trade as a whole became more efficient. The above resolution and its entire program during this period demonstrate that the Bund clearly saw the limitations of the economic struggle and sought to keep it within the framework of actual possibilities. This is further shown by the resolution concerning economic terrorism (violence, such as window-breaking, sabotage of machinery, physical conflicts with "scabs") adopted at the same fourth convention:

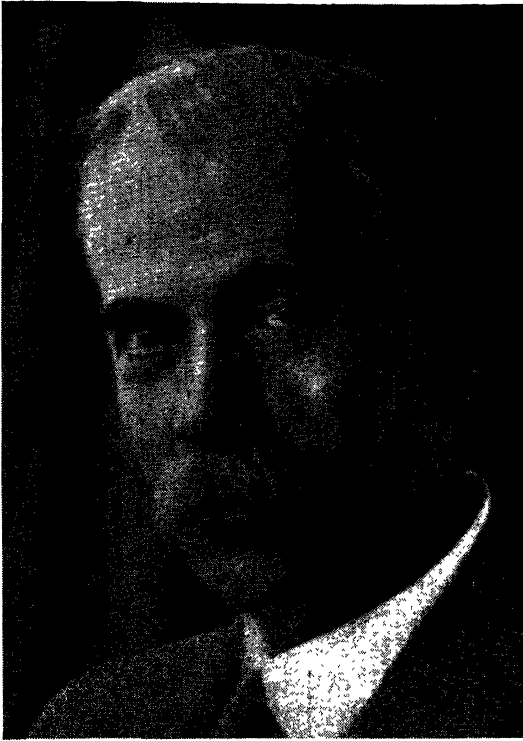
Inasmuch as economic terrorism—whether against employers or strike-breakers—confuses the social democratic consciousness of the workers, lowers their own moral standards and discredits the labor movement, this convention is opposed to economic terrorism.

The more clearly the narrow limits of economic strife in the Jewish world became manifest, the more every new conflict between workers and employers tended to result in a stalemate and, consequently, in the intervention of the police. Unions and strikes being prohibited in Russia, the Bund thus increasingly departed from the practical "economism" which had been dominant in the early stages of its activity.

The political struggle now began to claim a more prominent place not only in the practices of the Jewish labor movement but in its theory as well. The fourth convention of the Bund declared that although "the economic struggle is the best means of drawing the broad working masses into the movement, it is not necessary to conduct political agitation merely on the basis of economic demands. The political struggle must be waged as independent action and must occupy a prominent place in the activities of the organization. It should not be considered as a mere outgrowth of economic struggle and must be waged by means of purely political agitation, political demonstrations and May Day strikes with political demands, and so forth."

This new trend was largely in conformance with the general pattern of political development in Russia.

Toward the turn of the century, the Russian revolutionary movement began to make considerable progress. The great strikes in St. Petersburg and other cities aroused widespread public interest. Although the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party was not yet a strong mass movement, it had already gained widespread prominence and intellectual prestige. In 1900 its exiled leaders launched the magazine, *Iskra* ("The Spark"), which was printed in Stuttgart and soon began to exert a strong influence on the entire movement. The *Iskra* circle formed a militant faction within the Russian Social Democratic movement, opposed to the adherents of "economism". The *Iskra* policy, conceived and postulated by a group of such brilliant writ-



J. PORTNOY-NOAH (1872-1941)

ers as George Plekhanov, Paul Axelrod, Alexander Potresov, Vladimir Lenin and Julius Martov, soon resounded as the dominant voice of the party and also left its impress on the Bund.

As the Bund grew and developed into a mass movement, new leaders arose, mainly from the ranks of old Bundists who had been imprisoned or deported to Siberia in the first years of the organization's activity. Among them were "Noah" (Portnoy), the "chief" who after 1918 became the leader of the Polish Bund under the name of Józef; "Jonah" (Fishel Koigen); "Yudin" (Issay Aisenstadt); "Rachmiel" (Aaron Weinstein), and many others.

## 2. THE TSARIST GOVERNMENT AND THE BUND

As the most active and best organized section of the revolutionary movement in Russia, the Bund was fated to attract the special attention of the police agencies. In rapid sequence, the government resorted to three measures against it. First, it attempted to demoralize the growing movement polit-

ically by creating antagonism between the masses and the socialist intelligentsia; next, it attempted to intimidate the revolutionary elements by means of brutal punishment; finally, it sought to discourage and paralyze the Jewish forces of the revolutionary movement by intensifying anti-Semitic propaganda and pogroms, endeavoring in this way to mobilize the more conservative and non-political strata of the Jewish population against the "dangerous" Socialists who were ostensibly imperiling the entire Jewish community.

The first technique achieved its ultimate efficacy in the so-called Zubatov movement. This renegade revolutionist, later chief of the secret police, conceived at this point the idea of divorcing from the masses the revolutionary intelligentsia. "We must convince the workers that the labor movement and Social Democracy are not identical." The workers were promised that the Tsar would protect them from exploitation by their employers provided they did not engage in and aid the political struggle.

Zubatov began his "offensive" in 1898-99 by conducting long discussions with imprisoned Jewish Socialists whom he had brought to Moscow for this purpose. By 1901 he had enlisted a number of supporters, and they were permitted to establish a legal organization known as the Independent Jewish Labor Party.

The Zubatov movement had its greatest success in Minsk, where six Jewish trades supported it (bookbinders, locksmiths, carpenters, masons, brushmakers and tin-smiths). In Wilno the new party was incapable of establishing any substantial group and early in 1903 was compelled to announce the cessation of its activities. The Zubatovists succeeded far better in Odessa where the party came to exert some influence also among non-Jewish workers.

But the very success of the Zubatov movement in Odessa proved to be its Achilles-heel. In order to gain and retain the support of the workers, it had to organize strikes and on one occasion a general strike



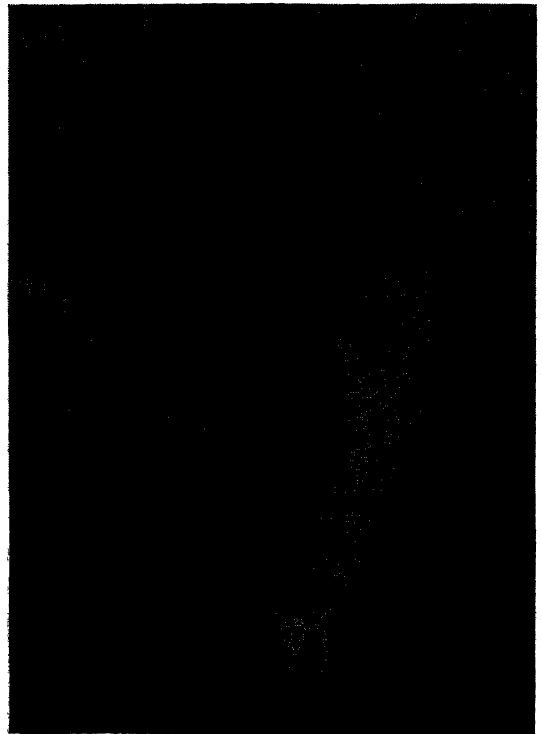
tile regions, such as Lodz and Bialystok, the economic crisis was even more disastrous than in Central Russia. There political unrest was sharply augmented by the effects of the war in the Far East and by the official pogrom policy, which never slackened, not even during the "political spring." Together with the entire revolutionary movement, the Jewish sections assumed a "defeatist" attitude and frankly hoped for a Japanese victory over the Tsarist government. The anti-war leaflets of the Bund and its propaganda encouraging civil disobedience among the young men called to arms, found a lively response among the Jews who viewed the Russian defeats in the Far East as an act of divine retribution for the Kishinev pogrom. During this period, the revolutionary activity of the Bund was in harmony and aligned with the political mood of the broad Jewish masses, and the Bund, in spite of its pronounced proletarian character, was rapidly becoming the spokesman and vanguard of the entire Jewish population. Its leaflets were distributed by the hundreds of thousands; its mass meetings and street demonstrations attracted tens of thousands, in spite of the brutal interference of the police and the Cossacks, who were used as a mounted police auxiliary. Open street demonstrations challenging the regime replaced the earlier clandestine gatherings; in time synagogues were more and more often used as halls for mass rallies.

The Bund's influence in the revolutionary movement, as said, reached its peak after "Red Sunday," when the St. Petersburg police killed hundreds of unarmed workers who were peacefully demonstrating with patriotic banners and portraits of the Tsar before the Imperial Winter Palace. On that historic day of January 9, 1905, the Romanov dynasty received the most crushing blow of its three hundred years' existence; the government itself, in effect, destroyed the legend that the Tsar was always kindly and responsive to the needs of his "children," and that only his evil

subordinates oppressed the "common people." The massacre of hundreds of devoted and patriotic Russians, parading under the leadership of a priest to ask the "little father" for additional consideration and generosity, took place under the very eyes of the Tsar, who did nothing to protect the innocent or punish the guilty.

The traditional faith in the Tsar was thus badly shattered on that winter day, even among the orthodox Russians. A furious storm of indignation swept the country; millions were stunned and shocked. One can easily imagine the effect in the Jewish Pale, where the population was without the traditional devotion to the Tsar.

Within a few days after "Red Sunday," the Central Committee of the Bund, which then had its secret headquarters at Dvinsk, printed 115,000 copies of a leaflet entitled *To Arms!*: "The great day has come. The Revolution is here . . . Now we must conquer or die . . . Break into the arsenals! Seize rifles, revolvers . . . To arms!"



V. MEDEM (1879-1923)

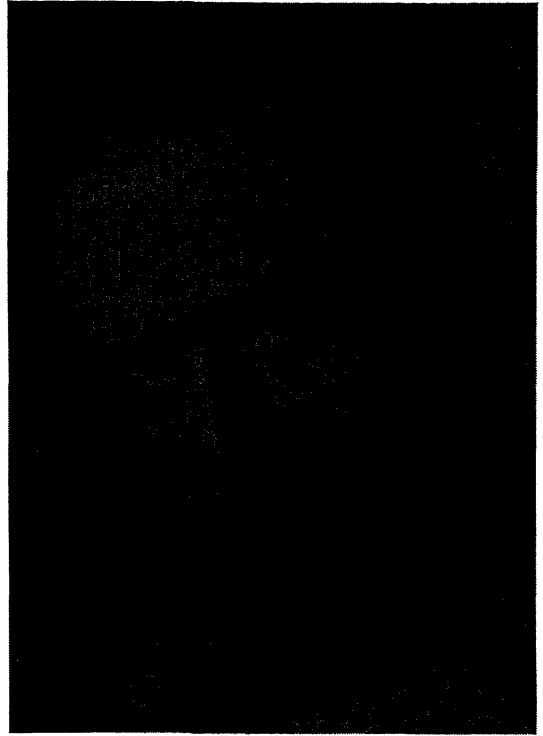
## THE JEWISH SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

This spirit of insurgence swept the entire region in which the Bund operated. Everywhere people called for arms: "The time for leaflets is past." A wave of general strikes and demonstrations spread throughout the Pale, and hundreds of Bund followers were injured and killed.

The period of mass activity and especially the years of semi-legality and semi-parliamentarism that followed, produced a generation of new leaders: mass orators such as "Maxim" (Klebansky), "Sergei" (Abram Braun), Max Goldfarb (David Lipetz), "Vladek" (B. Charney); writers and publicists such as A. Litvak (Chaim J. Helfand), Moisei Olgin (Novomysski), "Homunculus" (David Zaslavsky), "Zivyon" (B. Hofman), "Esther" (Maria Frumkin); theoreticians and lecturers like Vladimir Medem, a fully-assimilated and baptized Jew, who returned to the Jewish cause through the Bund, Mark Liber, "Slavek" (Bronislav Grosser), R. Abramovitch (Raphael Rein), Henryk Erlich, Moshe Rafes.

The revolutionary tide was rising, and even the most extreme repressive measures of the government could not arrest it. Between the summers of 1903 and 1904 some 4,500 Bundists were arrested, but others replaced them. The Bund's bulletin, *Posledniya Izvestiya* (Latest News), published in Russian in Geneva, summed up the situation in its 226th issue as follows:

The Jewish working masses are scattered throughout cities and small towns. They work in small shops and only a few larger enterprises. But this dispersion does not prevent these thousands upon thousands from living one common life. They have rallied around a single organization which has its roots and branches everywhere, and which everywhere works according to one uniform plan. Even the remotest, tiniest place feels the pressure of its arms; it can stop all activity, provoke a storm of indignation, terrorize the agents of the government, and shake its entire machinery . . . Visualize all this,



MARK LIBER (1879-1937)

and there will arise before you the majestic picture of a *revolutionary Vendée*.

#### 4. THE YEAR OF REVOLUTION: 1905

In a number of cities the strike wave began as early as January 11, two days after the "Red Sunday." In the large cities there were clashes with the police and the army, resulting in heavy casualties. In Warsaw the protest strike lasted four days. In Riga there was a joint demonstration of Latvian and Jewish workers, in which sixty to seventy thousand participated; shots fired by the troops into the crowd killed more than thirty, and over seventy were seriously wounded. In Wilno the general strike was called on January 11 and lasted several days; a similar strike was called in Kovno. In the small industrial cities of Smorgon and Krinky the general strike was called with such extraordinary solidarity that in the space of a few days both cities were completely in the hands of the workers. Strikes, demonstrations, and mass meetings were

ical action on the basis of the newly-won legality and no longer by revolutionary means.

This split in the revolutionary-progressive camp was amply exploited by the government and by all the conservative and reactionary elements in the cities and among the landed gentry who feared the growing peasant unrest and agrarian rebelliousness. The more the revolutionary parties tried to push ahead with the direct struggle for power (sailors' mutinies in Sveaborg, Kronstadt and Reval; soldiers' insurrections; strikes and workers' demonstrations), the sharper became the repressive measures of the government.

After a brief interlude of Duma-parliamentarism in 1906 and the early months of 1907, the electoral laws were altered by an arbitrary and unconstitutional *ukase* of the Tsar, who also sanctioned a system of brutal repression, with martial law, death sentences, and mass executions of revolutionists. Punitive expeditions were sent into the villages, and Cossack detachments filed into the cities. The prisons were once again filled with tens of thousands of political prisoners. The "Stolypin Era" had begun.

These developments had, of course, an impact on Russian Jewry. Until the beginning of 1906, the Bund was not only the dominant but the sole Jewish political party; a party not merely by dint of its organizational forms but also in political purpose and historical effect. This made the Bund a leading power in the struggle of the Jewish masses for civil and political rights, and endowed it with an informal but actual hegemony in the community: e.g., the Bundist "dictatorship" during the October days of 1905. The Bund's dominant role ended with the change in the general political situation.

Moderate liberals, conservatives, and even reactionaries now began to squeeze the revolutionaries out of the cities and the villages (cf. the agrarian reform of Stolypin). In the Jewish world, there emerged various non-socialist political groups that were

in contact with corresponding non-Jewish liberal and conservative circles and thus gradually won prestige and influence in the Jewish communities. The "Association for the Achievement of Full Rights for the Jewish People in Russia" was founded as early as April 1905, but not until the elections to the first Duma in 1906 did this group become a factor of political importance, despite the fact that it included in its ranks many prominent leaders of moderate persuasion, such as Maxim Winaver and Heinrich Sliosberg. Other groups arose, too: the Jewish Democrats (Alexander Braudo, Gregory Landau and others); the Jewish People's Party (headed by the noted Jewish historian, Simon Dubnow); and the Russian Zionists, who, at the convention of Helsinki in 1906, constituted themselves as a political party.

The defeat of the 1905 Revolution engendered the widespread feeling among large sections of the Jewish population that the sacrifices of the Jewish revolutionary movement had all been in vain. True enough, the Jews had gained the franchise in the elections to the Duma; nor could it be denied that the gains were due to the role the Bund had played in the Revolution. But mounting pogroms had shattered hopes of the possibilities of eradicating anti-Semitism. The fact that the revolutionary movement had not succeeded in winning equal rights for Jews (even though it had brought some reforms and improvements for Russia in general), led to widespread criticism of revolutionary methods.

Jewish nationalist trends became stronger, and the socialist intelligentsia felt once again the urge "to come back to their people." The prestige and political influence of the Jewish labor movement was still further weakened by the new electoral system, unilaterally decreed by the Tsar on June 3, 1907, which subdivided the electoral college into segregated "curias," the Jewish voters forming a "curia" of their own in each category, and tying the franchise to property qualifications. While the

propertied classes, including the petty bourgeoisie, possessed the right to vote, the Jewish workers were in effect disenfranchised. There was, of course, the so-called "workers' curia," but it embraced only large enterprises in several of the greater industrial centers so that Jewish workers were virtually excluded from representation. In spite of these difficulties it might have been possible, at least in the first Duma, to elect several Bundist deputies, but the Bund, together with the majority of the other revolutionary parties, had decided to boycott the elections. When the Socialist parties subsequently abandoned the boycott, the political situation had become such that the Bund was unable to overcome the legal and administrative barriers. Thus it came about that, although Jewish deputies were elected to the various Dumas, the Jewish working class had no deputies of its own.

The bourgeois Jewish deputies pretended to represent Russian Jewry as a whole, and during the election campaigns they made extensive use of their connections with the local Jewish *Kehillot*. In the conservative Jewish press, which had achieved a remarkable growth, there began a systematic campaign against the Bund and the social gains of Jewish workers. The Bund was accused of "ruining the Jewish middle class," of destroying the Jewish organism with "stubborn, blind fanaticism, and with insane passion" (*Kadimah*, no. 9, 1906).

This struggle over political ideas was extended to the economic field. Political reaction in Russia came at the time of severe economic crisis, which, as has been indicated, began in 1901. From year to year the effect of the depression was felt more and more severely both in villages and towns. In addition, the population of Russia was increasing at the rapid rate of about two million a year (including about 80,000 Jews). A substantial industrial revival in the cities, such as had taken place in the nineties, could have absorbed economically the enormous population influx from the villages. But this was impossible during

a serious depression, which was in turn intensified by the bitter struggle and the disturbances which the long and acute political crisis had engendered.

The more serious the economic crisis and unemployment, the weaker grew the economic position of the Jewish workers. At the time when the reactionaries were concentrating their line against the achievements of the revolutionary period, the employers, who had now detached themselves completely from the revolutionary coalition, utilized this opportunity to launch an attack on the economic and social position of the Jewish workers. Beginning with 1906, a series of lockouts took place in the Pale, leading to sharp and protracted conflicts. In contrast to the successes of previous years, these struggles in most cases now resulted in the defeat of the workers. As a consequence of the Russo-Japanese war, of counter-revolution, pogroms, economic depression, and acute social conflict, there began a huge wave of Jewish emigration from Russia and Poland. This exodus, affecting Jewish life in general, was, in particular, bound to influence the activities and ideology of the Jewish labor movement.

#### 6. NATIONALISM IN THE BUND

The founding of the Bund in itself was an expression of strong national consciousness. Significant in this connection is the speech of Julius Martov in 1895 (see p. 367). Influenced by the prevalent emotions and tendencies of the socialist Wilno of his days, Martov advocated a Jewish labor organization not merely for the technical purpose of proselytizing in the Yiddish language but for more significant purposes: he pointed out that the principles of revolutionary struggle required that the Jews themselves fight for civil and political rights rather than have them rely on the expectation that these rights would be automatically granted them in the wake of the victory of the general revolutionary movement. The Jewish workers, he declared, must not depend on the revolutionary exer-

tions of others. Others would be concerned with general demands and with the interests of the working class as a whole and could not be expected to solve the specific problems of the Jewish masses. For these special activities, he maintained, there had to be a special organization of the Jewish workers.

In the early years of the Bund's activity, the "specific Jewish interests" were understood to indicate the demand for equal civil and political rights. But the rapidly growing Jewish labor movement, which was then concentrated exclusively in the Bund, underwent an internal development which kept growing stronger as Bundist practice (and theory) advanced from group propaganda to mass agitation. The more the Jewish working masses were drawn into the strike movement and the political struggles, the more "Jewish" the movement became. It proved essential to use Yiddish when the broad masses had to be reached, and the language, as the primary instrument of propaganda, had to be developed. Therefore the propagandists and agitators of the Bund, together with the demands of practical revolutionary work, had to concentrate on the kind of activity that may have seemed more appropriate for a cultural society than for a political party. While remaining a revolutionary party and without a relevant ideological motive, the Bund thus began to devote itself to the development, advancement, and propagation of Jewish culture or, more properly speaking, of general culture in Yiddish.

To this empirical development, which was the product of pragmatic considerations, there was soon added ever-increasing ideological pressure which operated in the same "nationalizing" direction. These influences came from two sources: from the Jewish and from the general socialist stream. The period of the eighties and early nineties had seen the revival of Jewish nationalism. The pogroms of the eighties had dealt a powerful blow to the naive idea of assimilation through the *Has-kalah*, and had put the Jewish question in

the forefront of Jewish thought not only as a problem of Jewry but also as the problem of Jewishness, of Judaism. The birth of modern Zionism—the first Zionist Congress took place in 1897, a few weeks before the founding convention of the Bund—aroused lively discussions and awakened national consciousness. The ideas of Ahad Haam and Simon Dubnow also influenced the thinking of the Jewish Socialists. As early as 1898 Chaim Zhitlowsky, in the Bund's *Yidisher Arbeter* voiced the demand for "national rights for Jews." A much stronger influence was exerted, however, through the large student groups at the universities and technical institutes of Switzerland, Germany, France, Austria, Belgium. (As the institutions of higher education in Tsarist Russia had a *numerous clausus* for Jews, the Jewish youth was compelled to study abroad.) All the Russian and Jewish revolutionary parties sought to recruit followers among the Jewish students from Russia. The largest groups were those of the Bund, and Bundist students in Berlin and Vienna, Bern and Zurich, Geneva and Brussels devoted a good deal of time to the study and discussions of the Jewish question and of nationality problems in various countries.

One state in particular was the subject of closest study: Austria-Hungary. Until the First World War, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was the classic example of a multi-national state with all its inherent problems. It was, therefore, not accidental that the Austrian Social Democrats produced the most important theoretical contributions to a better understanding of the national question. Karl Renner (who wrote under the names of Synopticus and R. Springer) and Otto Bauer were the most prominent proponents of a new concept of national autonomy, which was first advanced at the Brno Congress of the Austrian Social Democratic Party in 1899. At this congress the delegates of the South-Slavic Federation moved a resolution endorsing the principle of "extra-territorial national autonomy." The draft resolution demanded

"that each nationality living in Austria-Hungary . . . shall constitute an autonomous body which shall be independent of the territory on which its members live and shall provide for and regulate its national requirements in regard to culture and language. The territorial divisions shall be of purely administrative significance and must have no bearing on nationality status. All languages shall have equal rights in the state; there shall be no official language." While the proposed resolution was adopted in somewhat modified form, the mixed principle of territorial and extra-territorial cultural autonomy was endorsed by the congress.

The same concept received systematic attention in Karl Renner's pamphlet: *Staat und Nation* (published in 1899 under the name of Synopticus) and in his book: *Der Kampf der Nation um den Staat* (published in 1902 under the name of R. Springer).

A later study which had a most profound influence on the development of Socialist thought on this issue was Otto Bauer's book, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (1907).

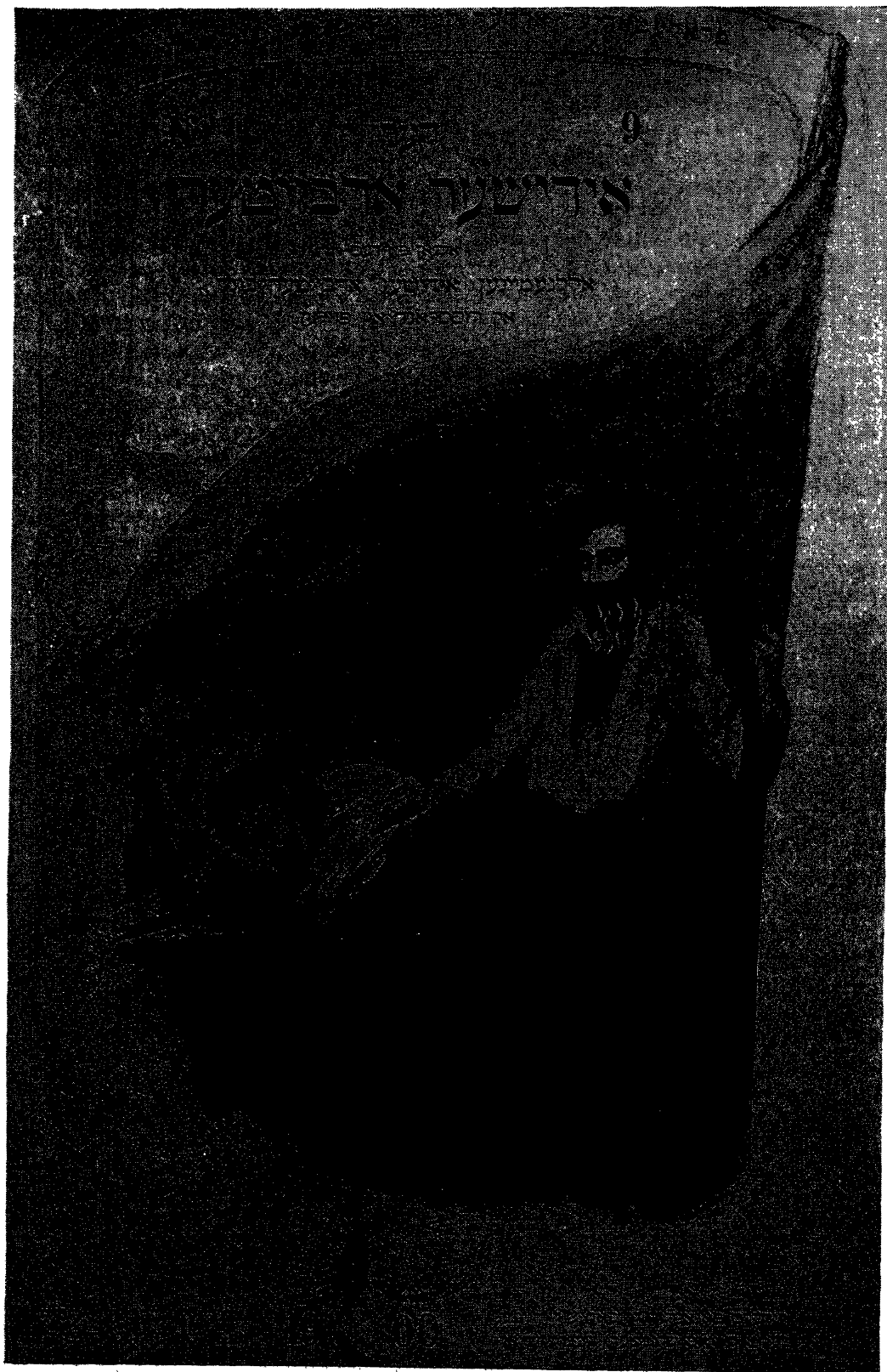
The Russian Empire comprised a still greater number of ethnic groups than Austria-Hungary, and these groups were all involved in the process of becoming "nationalities." It was safe to assume, therefore, that the political framework of the future Russian republic, which would succeed Tsarism, would be that of a multinational federation, such as the socialist theoreticians envisaged for Austria-Hungary. The Bundists assumed that the future Russian Federation would likewise be composed of autonomous national units, territorial or extra-territorial, depending on the particular character of the individual nationality. They maintained that in Russia the Jewish people must be recognized as a non-territorial nationality entitled to cultural autonomy, with Yiddish as its national language.

The new nationality concept of the Bund, in which the views of Simon Dub-

now were intertwined with the theories of the Austrian Social Democrats, was first formulated among Russian-Jewish student and intellectual circles in Switzerland and Germany. Only gradually and not without considerable reluctance was it accepted by the Bundist organizations and leaders on the spot.

This indigenous opposition to the new ideas had its roots in the particular conditions in which the Bund had been operating. In the Pale, with its large Jewish population and a relatively advanced Jewish labor movement, the problem of cooperation with the non-Jewish labor movement played an important part. Such cooperation could proceed only on the basis of an internationalist ideology. Consequently both in Bundist circles and in many non-Jewish organizations in the region, the fear existed that nationalism might weaken the class cohesion among the workers of different nationalities. Hence the inclination of the leaders to keep within narrow limits the nationalist feelings which were rapidly gaining ground. At the third convention of the Bund, in Kovno at the end of December 1899, the conflict between the nationalists and their opponents had already flared up. Delegate "A" (John Mill, the representative of the Bund's "Committee Abroad" in Geneva) urged the Jewish proletariat to fight, in addition to equal citizenship rights, for equal national rights as well. Of what use, he insisted, would it be to the Jewish working masses, for instance, to have the freedom of assembly if they were compelled to conduct their meetings in Russian? The speaker cited the example of Germany, where the Poles had no right to use their own language at political gatherings. We must not forget—John Miller declared—that the Bund is not just a temporary association to fight Tsarism; it is possible that in the interests of the Jewish masses the organization will have to exist for a long time to come.

Several speakers at the convention opposed Mill. We, Social Democrats—they



TITLE-PAGE OF THE *Yidisher Arbeter*, ILLEGAL PERIODICAL OF THE BUND

said—must avoid making demands which may divert the attention of the proletariat from its class interests to its nationalist aspirations. For the time being we are faced with a more immediate task, and that is the achievement of political freedom. After a long debate the following resolution was adopted: "The Bund includes in its political demands only equal civil rights but not national rights."

The first attack of the "Bundist nationalists" from abroad had been repelled but the question was by no means settled. The same convention decided to open a discussion on the national question in the theoretical organ of the Bund, *Der Yidisher Arbeter*. At the fourth convention in April 1901, the principal speaker on the national question was Mark Liber. This convention, at which 24 delegates from Warsaw, Lodz, Bialystok, Grodno, Wilno, Kovno, Vitebsk, Dvinsk, Homel, and two unidentified cities of Southern Russia were present, adopted the following resolution, epoch-making in the history of the Bund:

This convention maintains that, in accordance with the Social Democratic program, not only must one class not be permitted to oppress another; not only must the government not oppress citizens; but no nation must oppress another, and no language must take precedence over another. This convention maintains that a country like Russia, which consists of a number of different nations, will in the future have to become a federation of nations, each of them having full autonomy in whatever region it resides. This convention maintains that the concept of nationality also applies to the Jewish people. In view of the fact, however, that under present conditions it is premature to raise a demand for national autonomy for the Jews, this convention resolves that for the time being we must confine ourselves to combating all anti-Jewish legislation and to expose and protest every oppression of the Jewish nationality, but at the same time we must

guard against the inflation of nationalist feelings, for this can serve only to reduce class-consciousness and lead to chauvinism.

This resolution bears the distinct marks of a compromise between the two schools of thought on the national question. On the one hand, it recognized that the Jews were a nationality, with all the implicit consequences; on the other hand, the convention declined to reorient its propaganda accordingly in order not to jeopardize the class-consciousness of the Jewish workers. This compromise was, however, followed by a very concrete and clear-cut decision. The convention decided that the Bund, as the representative of the Jewish workers, must henceforth constitute a "federated section" within the All-Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. By this it meant a reshaping of the Social Democratic Party into a federation of fully autonomous national sections, in harmony with the contemplated future constitution of the Russian Republic.

In the spring of 1903, on the eve of the fifth convention of the Bund, which was to take place in Zurich, the Committee Abroad called a special conference in Geneva in order to discuss the national question and the issue of Bund—Social Democratic relationships. The meeting, in which Vladimir Kosovsky, Arkady Kremer, "Timofei" Kopelson, Zhenya Hourwich, Vladimir Medem, Mark Liber, Raphael Abramovitch, B. Bensky (Levinson) and several others participated, was in full agreement with the Austrian Social Democrats on the basic concept of the nationality question and accordingly formulated its views on Russia's future in general and the Jewish nationality issue in particular. The idea that the Russian Social Democratic Party should be reorganized into a federation of autonomous national sections also received clear expression in the draft resolution. When the fifth convention of the Bund met, however, it divided into two equal factions on the issue of national au-



tonomy for the Jewish people. No resolution could be, therefore, adopted. It was only at the sixth convention in October 1905, that the national-minded wing of the Bund won.

As to the relationship between the Bund and the Russian Social Democrats, the 1903 convention adopted a resolution emphatically supporting the federalist viewpoint. The Bundist delegates immediately proceeded to the second Congress of the Social Democratic Party, held in London, with strict instructions to offer this resolution as an ultimatum. The great majority of the Russian Social Democratic Party, however, flatly refused to accept the Bund's demands. They refused even to discuss the national issue. As for the concept of a "Jewish nation," it was strongly objected to by the assimilated Jewish intellectuals and workers who conducted their socialist and revolutionary activities in the ranks of the general, all-Russian, party. The Jewish *Iskrov-tzi*, including such prominent men as Paul Axelrod, Julius Martov, who a decade earlier had helped found the Bund, Alexander Martynov, Theodore Dan and Leon Trotsky, opposed the Bund's demands to figure in the party as a national organization that would be the "sole representative" of the entire Jewish proletariat in the movement (which would have meant the non-admission into the party of both the assimilationist groups and the Zionist Socialists). They were ready to accept the Bund as a linguistic unit of Jewish workers who did not understand Russian (or Polish) but they resolutely opposed the nationalist *Weltanschauung* of the Bund in general and its concept of Jews-as-a-nationality in particular. Not even the representatives of other minority groups (Georgians, Armenians, Poles, Ukrainians) supported the Bund; at this time they were all "centralists" opposed to the concept of a federation of autonomous nations.

Obedying the strict instructions given them by the fifth convention, the Bund's delegates (Arkady, Kosovsky, Noah, Yudin,

Medem and Liber) declared that the Bund was leaving the party and left the congress amidst perplexity and expressions of regret.

The second Social Democratic Congress was, incidentally, the same gathering at which Russian Social Democracy first split into "majority" and "minority" factions; in Russian, the partisans of these two groups were called, respectively, "Bolshevik" and "Menshevik." This was the split that was to acquire historic importance not only within Russia but far beyond its borders as well.

Not all of the delegates to this fateful congress regretted the withdrawal of the Bund. Lenin and his faction, who received a majority of one vote after the Bundists had left, welcomed the decision of the Bund. The Bundist would most certainly have voted against him on the crucial issue of "party membership," and this vote would have reduced his faction to a minority. At any rate, Lenin and his friends were prominent among those who violently attacked the Bund.\*

The secession of the Bund from the Russian Social Democratic Party, with which the Bund had been affiliated from the very beginning and in whose founding its leaders had played an important role, made a deep impression on the Jewish working class. A period of sharp struggle between the Bund and the *Iskra* faction ensued. The latter organized special committees to work among Jewish workers and to counteract the "nationalism" of the Bund. In countless lectures, symposiums, and party meetings the relations between the Bund and the Russian Socialists were debated. This struggle contributed greatly to the strength-

\* It was only three years later, in May 1906, after the Party Congress at Stockholm, that the Bund decided to return into the Social-Democratic Party. The proposal to rejoin the party, made by the Bund delegates to the Stockholm Congress (Mark Liber, Jonah Koigen and R. Abramovitch) provoked in the Bund a stormy discussion but was finally approved by the Bund's Lemberg convention. According to terms of the new agreement the Bund was given the freedom to propagate its national concept and its program in the ranks of the Party, and full organizational autonomy was guaranteed.

ening of national feelings and attitudes within the Bund.

The Bund had to defend its position not only in the struggle with the assimilationists among the Russian Social Democrats and Polish Socialists but also in incessant battles with the Zionists and other nationalist groups. From the outset there had existed a deep psychological and ideological abyss between the Zionists and the Bund. The Bund was the first modern political party to arise among the Jews. For the first time the Jewish masses had organized and waged a fight both for full equality and for national autonomy. The entire appeal and *raison d'être* of the Bund lay in its insistence that the Jews must not ask for favors but, like all other inhabitants, fight for their rights. This the Bund could do only because it accepted the Diaspora (*Galut*) as the basic premise of its ideology, while Zionism embodied the principled negation of the Diaspora: it advanced the thesis that the Jews were not, and could never be, organically and definitely rooted in any country in the dispersion. According to Zionist philosophy, Jews could become a "normal nation," like other peoples, only after the establishment of their own state in Palestine; the Bund, however, envisioned the road to freedom and equality in the revolutionary socialist struggle in the Diaspora itself. Theoretically a synthesis might have been feasible between these two concepts—and many Zionist Socialists tried to do just that—but in the actualities of political propaganda of that revolutionary epoch the two tendencies clashed. One need scarcely be reminded that the ideal of Zionism was viewed by the Bund as Utopian, and a bourgeois Utopia at that, while in the concrete realities of the national struggle of that period, Zionism offered the Jewish masses no outlet for the militant, revolutionary forces which they had developed. Zionism could be realized, if at all, not through revolutionary class struggle but through diplomatic negotiations with the Turkish Sultan and other bourgeois gov-

ernments, and required, in addition, the permanent assistance of the Jewish capitalists and middle-classes; in other words, it necessarily and inescapably involved cooperation with forces toward which the Jewish working class in Russia bore no friendly feelings, and on which it could have no lasting influence. In the cultural field, the Bund's program favored the development of the Yiddish language, literature, press and art, whereas Zionism looked to the revival of Hebrew as the national language of the entire Jewish people.

From a socio-political viewpoint, the conflict between Zionism and the Bund reflected a class division: Zionism was the movement of the Jewish middle-classes, of bourgeois intellectuals and of a section of the bourgeoisie which opposed the intensification of the political struggle in Russia on national grounds. In practice, if not in principle, Zionism frequently joined hands with apolitical elements that considered it dangerous to have Jews play a leading role in the revolutionary movement. For all practical purposes, the Zionist orientation involved Jewish non-participation in political activities within Russia. The Bund, on the other hand, stood for an even stronger, more radical struggle on the part of the Jewish masses, not only for their own political freedom but also for Socialism.

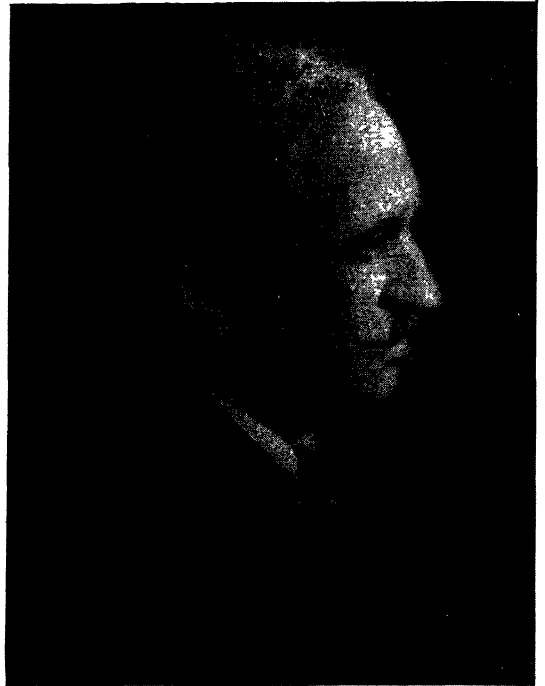
Beginning with 1901-02, groups arose which sought to find a synthesis between Socialism and Zionism. The Zionist Socialists made their appearance, but the Bund, which remained the unchallenged leader of the Jewish labor movement, did not revise its basic attitude towards Zionism. The constant competition with Zionism and the Zionist Socialists compelled the Bund, however, to accentuate and define more precisely its own attitude toward the national question. As bitterly as the Bund struggled against the Socialist assimilationists of the Polish Socialist Party or the *Iskra* faction in favor of the autonomous existence of a Jewish labor movement, it consistently rejected at the same time every suggestion

of an over-all Jewish policy. In the view of the advocates of cultural autonomy within the Bund, the concept of a Jewish nation applied only to that part of the Jewish people who shared, not only a common historical past, but also a common (Yiddish) language and literature. It was only this "Jewish nation" that the Bund had in mind when it fought for national rights and cultural autonomy. The concept of a Jewish nation as an international phenomenon was still a matter of dispute among Bundist circles of the period.

## II. THE NATIONALIST SOCIALIST PARTIES (1903-1906)

Until 1903, the Bund was in fact the only Jewish Socialist party in Russia, and within the Jewish community its principal antagonist was the Zionist movement. Gradually, and in large measure as a result of the activities of the Bund itself, new socialist groups emerged which were attracted to the Zionist movement. In 1900 and 1901 such Zionist labor groups (Poale Zion) were to be found in Minsk and Ekaterinoslav (founded by B. Borochoy and Simon Dobin). During the same period, Zionist Socialist groups were founded in Galicia and by Russian-Jewish students in Vienna and Berlin.

On the basis of orthodox Marxism, these groups maintained that the Jewish problem could be solved only when the Jews became again a "normal nation" living in a separate land of their own. But, in contrast with the Poale Zion, the theoreticians of the Zionist Socialists (commonly known at that time as "Es-Es") such as Dr. Nachman Syrkin, did not insist on Palestine as the future Jewish homeland; they were willing to accept any other territory suited for mass settlement of Jews, e.g., Uganda. (See Ben-Adir, *Modern Currents in Jewish Social and National Life* in this volume). By 1902-03 Zionist Socialist groups had been organized in numerous cities in the Pale, and the fifth convention of the Bund, in the summer of 1903, found itself obliged to call its adherents to combat Zionism in all its forms.



BEN-ADIR (1878-1942)

The year 1903 marked a turning point in the history of the Jewish Socialist movement in Russia. The Kishinev pogrom dealt a severe blow to the political "neutrality" of Zionism. It now became clearer than ever that the Tsarist regime was by no means a matter of indifference to the Jewish population. Zionist circles themselves, shattered as they were by the split on the Uganda issue (1903), began to realize that Zionism offered no immediate answer to the Jewish problem and that some practical political program for immediate action was needed. On the other hand, the pogroms and continuing measures against the Jewish revolutionaries caused a rising flow of emigration from Russia. The number of Jews from Russia who arrived in the United States steadily increased, as is shown by the following figures:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number</i>
1901	37,660
1902	37,846
1903	47,689
1904	77,544
1905	92,388
1906	125,234

This progressive increase was a result not only of severe economic distress but also of the powerful psychological and emotional anxieties that gripped Russian Jewry. It seemed as if an entire people was preparing to migrate. The political evolution of Zionism and the growth of the emigration movement—in "Es-Es" theory, the basis for a Jewish state—created a favorable climate for the growth of the Zionist Socialist movement.

In the spring of 1903, a conference of Zionist Socialist groups in Russia was held in Rowno. Six months later, the so-called group of Rebirth (*Vozrozhdeniye*) was founded at a conference held in Kiev, and a short time later the first issue of the magazine *Vozrozhdeniye* appeared (with the co-operation of M. Ratner, Ben-Adir, M. Silberfarb and Dr. Ch. Zhitlowsky). Late in 1904 and early in 1905, the Zionist Socialist Workers' Party was founded in Odessa, and its first convention was held in April 1906. By this time, the party had organized a considerable number of local units throughout the Pale and claimed a membership of 27,000. In February 1906, a preliminary conference of the Jewish Social Democratic Labor Party, the Poale Zion, was held at Poltava. By the middle of that year the Poale Zion claimed a membership of about 16,000. At the same time the SERP, or "Seimist," movement arose: the Jewish Socialist Workers' Party, evolving out of the earlier *Vozrozhdeniye* groups. According to its own claims, the SERP numbered about 13,000 members. (All these membership figures refer to the year 1906, when the revolutionary tide was at its peak.)

The Poale Zion and the Zionist Socialists considered themselves Social Democrats and orthodox Marxists, whereas the Jewish Socialist Workers' Party was ideologically close to the Socialist Revolutionary *Narodniki*.

In 1904-1906 Poale Zion groups were established in Galicia, the United States, Palestine, and in some large centers of Western Europe. At the same time, a number of groups with a similar program were

formed in the United States. In 1907 the first world conference of the Poale Zion was held at The Hague, where the World Federation of the Poale Zion was founded.

### III. JEWISH GROUPS IN THE GENERAL SOCIALIST PARTIES OF POLAND AND RUSSIA

The four Jewish Socialist organizations described above did not comprise all the Jewish Socialists in Russia and Poland. There were also Jewish labor groups directly affiliated with the general, All-Russian Socialist parties, and especially with the Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.). The May 1893, issue of *Przedswit*, the party organ published in London, contained an appeal by Józef Pilsudski, "To our comrades, the Jewish Socialists, in the provinces taken from Poland." In 1896 Jewish sympathizers of the party in the United States formed a group under the name of The Jewish Socialist Post From America To Poland, which undertook to supply the Jewish workers in Poland with Socialist literature. The first brochure which this group published was *Gan Eden ha-Tahton* by B. Feigenbaum.

The establishment of an independent party by the Bund, which was at the same time connected with the Russian Social Democrats, aroused great indignation among the leaders of the Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.), who attacked the setting up of a separate Jewish Socialist movement. The Bund replied with a pamphlet by V. Kosovsky entitled, "The Fight of the Polish Socialist Party against the Bund" (1898). At the end of 1898, the first issue of the Polish Socialist Party's periodical in Yiddish, *Der Arbeter*, was published in London, and in all about 56 issues subsequently appeared, the last dated August 16, 1907. In 1907 seven issues of the party periodical, *Di Proletarishe Velt*, a popular monthly were published. In October 1905, 21 delegates from 14 organizations attended the fifth conference of the Jewish Polish Socialist Party.

In 1905-1906, there were Jewish sections of the Polish Social Democratic Party (P.S.D.) in a number of the larger cities. During June-September 1906, the organ of the Social Democrats, *Di Roite Fon*, made its appearance, and on July 28-29, 1906, the first conference was held.

After the Bund's secession from the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in 1903, Jewish sections of the R.S.D.L.P. were established in a number of localities. These did not meet with much success. By 1905 the R.S.D.L.P. in Lithuania and White Russia had recruited only 970 worker-members, of whom 575 were Jewish.

In 1904 anarchist groups were formed in Odessa and Bialystok, and during the following year similar bodies were organized in other towns. In 1906, when evidence of the decline of the revolutionary movement began to appear, anarchist sentiment grew. In June 1907, a conference of Anarchist groups in Lithuania and Poland took place.

#### IV. THE PERIOD 1907-1919

##### 1. YEARS OF REACTION

The coup d'état of Premier Stolypin on June 3, 1907, brought about not only an arbitrary change of election laws but also a drastic restriction of the liberties won in 1905. Repressive measures against the revolutionary parties now took the most extreme forms: characteristic were the cruel punitive expeditions, trials by court-martial and hangings. Under the impact of the "white terror" and, to an even greater extent, as a result of the general trend to the "right," the revolutionary movement began to deteriorate. This process, of course, also affected the Jewish labor movement. Even the strongest labor organization, the Bund, which in its official report to the London Congress of the Social Democratic Party in 1907 claimed over 25,000 members, was rapidly being weakened, almost to the point of disappearance. One of the foremost publicists of the Bund, A. Litvak, wrote: "Through the entire summer of 1907 in all our organizations there was talk

of crisis. . . . By 1908 there was nobody left to talk of the crisis. One after another, the units folded up."

Still more acute was the crisis among the Zionist Socialists and Jewish Socialists. The official report to the fourth convention of the Poale Zion stated that "activities are virtually at a standstill. The party has entirely collapsed . . . Only at the end of December 1908, was it possible to establish contact with several cities. The total number of members is about 400." As to the Zionist Socialist Workers' Party, B. Gutman relates in his memoirs that "in comparison with the Bund the disintegration of the Zionist Socialist Workers' Party was much greater . . . Despair overwhelmed the membership and there began a mass flight from the party and its periphery . . . Not only rank and file members abandoned it; a number of prominent leaders likewise left." A. Litvak commented similarly in the article cited above: "The first to leave [the Bund] were the fellow-travelers and sympathizers. Fashions changed; interest shifted elsewhere. . . . A little later, the ranks of active workers began to get thin. . . . Then the veteran workers began to leave, those who had devoted their entire youth to the movement. . . . That was the tragedy."

But the years of political and social reaction and economic depression did not represent a period of decline and collapse entirely. The recently gained and remaining liberties of the semi-parliamentary regime provided the Socialist parties with some means of legal activity. The problem was for the revolutionary parties to make extensive use of these facilities without betraying their revolutionary ideals. It was this problem of adjusting themselves to the new political situation created by the half-won and half-lost Revolution of 1905 that became a major issue in party discussions. One school of thought (the so-called "liquidators") held that the clandestine organizations, which served as nuclei of revolutionary activity prior to 1905, had been outdated by events and that the total energy

of the party should be marshaled for an attempt to utilize in the most effective way the new legally-permitted facilities. Against these views, which were bluntly and fervently stated by one of the *Iskra* founders, Alexander Potresov, the left wing of the movement, represented especially by Lenin's faction, fought fiercely condemning every adjustment to the prevailing legal conditions and demanding the continuation of direct revolutionary action.

The Jewish labor movement, particularly the Bund, assumed a "centrist" position which brought it closer to the Menshevik wing of the Russian Social Democrats. In the Bund, the faction advocating the maximum use of legal means was victorious, but the Bundist protagonists of "legalism," did not advocate the liquidation of illegal party cells any more than the opposing minority faction. Thus the Bund at its eighth conference in 1910 issued directives to the local organizations to proceed with the active pursuit of all kinds of legal associations, from trade unions to dramatic circles, cultural clubs, choirs, historical and educational societies. Interest in cultural activity was genuine and not merely a "front" for illegal political action. This interest was still stronger among the Zionist Socialist groups. The most significant manifestation of the eagerness for Yiddish culture and education was the Czernowitz (Bukovina) Conference of 1908, in which all the factions of the Jewish radical camp took part.

Throughout the Jewish Pale a network of associations was organized for the promotion of Yiddish culture. For the Jewish worker activity of this sort offered a new field, one which had no immediate political significance—even if in many instances it provided a vantage point for political action. In many cases the cultural association developed a mass character. The Yiddish "renaissance" which had begun at the turn of the century in the Jewish labor movement found its continuation in these activities. The legal labor press in Yiddish and Yiddish newspapers in general made great

strides during this period and played a prominent role in this process. The first Jewish Socialist daily in Russia, the Bundist *Folkszeitung*, appeared in Wilno in December 1905. In addition, a number of periodicals and pamphlets were published. In 1905 the Labor Zionist parties also began to promote literary activities. To some extent the middle class press also helped to maintain the atmosphere and conditions of legality essential to the Jewish labor movement.

## 2. REVIVAL (1911-1914)

The protracted economic depression ended in 1910 and was followed by a boom that paved the way for a revival of the labor movement in Russia generally and in the Jewish Pale in particular. The initiative was now, however, taken by labor rather than by the employers. Whereas prior to the period of reaction lockouts against workers had been the rule, now strikes and campaigns for better working conditions were the order of the day.

Working class political organization likewise began to show clear signs of recovery. The eighth conference of the Bund was held in 1910 (the seventh having taken place in 1906). In February 1911, the fourth conference of the Zionist Socialists took place in Vienna.

In 1912 the revolutionary movement received a strong impetus as a result of the "Lena Massacre." A sharp clash had taken place in April of that year at the Lena River gold mines in Siberia between the workers and the management. The soldiers that were sent shot at the strikers, killing and injuring many. This evoked widespread protest—reactions of indignation and outrage, which were voiced also by the Jewish workers. The Central Committee of the Bund issued a call summoning the Jewish workers "to fight, to protest!" According to a report in the Warsaw *Lebnsfragn*, in the May Day stoppage (April 18) which was planned as a demonstration against the Lena massacre, 6,000 Jewish workers took part in that city, 3,000 in Wilno (includ-

ing non-Jews); 400, in Minsk, 500, in Bobruisk; etc. In a number of other cities party rallies held that day adopted strongly-worded resolutions.

This was the first mass demonstration of the Jewish working class after the years of reaction, and marked a new beginning along the entire "front." The legal Bundist periodicals reappeared; first, *Lebnsfragn* in Warsaw, in May 1912; then *Di Tsait* in St. Petersburg (a few others had appeared earlier). Between 1912 and 1914, the Poale Zion also published several issues of its magazine. On May 16, 1914, the first issue of the Poale Zion weekly, *Dos Vort*, was published in St. Petersburg; together with all other Socialist magazines, it ceased publication with the outbreak of World War I. The Zionist Socialists issued the *Zukunft*, and the Jewish Socialists *Di Alte Shtime*.

The second mass demonstration of the Jewish proletariat took place in connection with the Beilis trial. Mendel Beilis, a Jewish resident of Kiev, was indicted by the district attorney for the alleged murder of a Christian boy for ritual purposes. The whole story was a flagrant "frame-up" fabricated by the local "Black Hundreds," criminal elements, and the police—which was later exposed at the trial. But the Tsarist government chose to support the charges. Government experts were called in to prove the veracity of the accusations. Thus the Beilis trial was transformed into a purely political demonstration on the part of the reactionary regime.

The liberal and socialist movement of Russia answered the challenge of the reaction by intensified anti-Tsarist propaganda. The Bund and other Jewish radical groups played an important and active part in this campaign. Throughout the nation it organized meetings and mass demonstrations. In September 1913, about 20,000 workers went out on strike in Warsaw; within several days the strike was supported by 50,000 Jewish workers in 70 localities. This represented an important extension of the Jewish protest movement against the government-inspired anti-Semitic propaganda

campaign. But its importance was augmented by the fact that the Duma and the entire liberal press were also media of strong campaigns. In their concerted efforts against the Beilis trial, the organized Jewish workers sought to emerge to some extent from the political isolation in which they had found themselves ever since the failure of the 1905 Revolution. This intent immediately found expression in a new wave of mass sympathy for and the increased prestige of the labor parties in all walks of Jewish life.

The period 1913-1914 brought intensified economic strife, which indicated that the Bund and the trade unions established by it were still regarded by the Jewish workers as the instrument to lead them in their social and political struggle. At the elections to the fourth Duma, in which the Bund participated together with the non-Jewish Socialists, it undertook despite all administrative interference and formal difficulties, to rally around itself substantial sections of the Jewish population. In Warsaw the Polish Socialist Party and the Bund succeeded in electing the Polish worker, Jagiello, as deputy.

The movement was making strides throughout the entire nation as well as in the Jewish labor world. But at precisely the moment when the revolutionary currents began to attract increasingly wider support, the war broke out.

### 3. THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The war, which abruptly altered the entire political situation in Russia, was of special significance to the Jewish labor movement. The war zone comprised the entire Jewish Pale. Congress Poland, Lithuania, and a part of White Russia and the Baltic states were occupied by the Germans early in the war. To the destruction which the war brought were added the persecutions directed by Russian civil and military authorities against the Jewish population.

On the eve of the war, Russia was the only large state in the world where the Jews still did not, even on paper, possess equal

rights, and where a militant anti-Semitism was official government policy. On the other hand, the status of the Jews in Germany, and especially in Austria-Hungary, was rather satisfactory. It was not surprising, therefore, that the Jewish population of the Central European powers proved patriotic and loyal, while the Russian Jews and the Jews in the Polish territories of the Russian Empire were indifferent or even openly hostile to the war waged by the Tsar.

German propaganda did everything possible to deepen the rift between the Jews and the Russian government. Hindenburg and Ludendorff professed their friendship for the oppressed Jews in the German-occupied areas, while the German press played up the liberatory mission of the Germans in the East. Russian counter-propaganda, clumsy and devoid of conviction, replied to the German wooing of the Jews by accusing the entire Jewish population of Western Russia of being "spies" for the German Kaiser, Wilhelm. This myth of "Jewish espionage" on behalf of the Germans was utilized by the Tsarist government to drive hundreds of thousands of Jews from their homes in the border region. A number of towns and villages in the combat zone were completely "cleared" of Jewish inhabitants, who were forcibly evacuated to the rear. Special welfare organizations had to be set up to provide shelter and relief for these involuntary refugees. Communal kitchens, children's homes, employment bureaus and loan co-operatives had to be founded. The leaders of the Jewish Socialist parties took an active part in this relief work which became a national issue. Gradually, political organizations began to re-emerge. In 1915 and 1916, the Poale Zion, the Bund and the Zionist Socialists held conferences. There were two principal problems on the agenda: the attitude towards the war, and the Jewish question.

The Russian Socialist parties were themselves divided on the war issue. Some of the Social Democrats held that the workers must take an active part in the defense

of the fatherland (these were the so-called *oborontsy*). A second group, led by Lenin and other Bolsheviks, adopted a policy of defeatism. The majority of the Mensheviks, supported by most of the Bund, espoused the "internationalist" attitude, and the Social Democratic deputies to the fourth Duma voted against military appropriations, as did Karl Liebknecht in the German Reichstag and the Socialists in the Serbian parliament. While it changed greatly after the Revolution of March 1917, this was the prevalent position in the Jewish labor movement during the first war years.

The war had, moreover, placed the Jewish problem in a new light. All Jewish circles in Europe and America were concerned with the question of equal rights for the Jews at the coming peace conference, with the problem of a World Jewish Congress, and so on. At a Bund conference, held in Kharkov in May 1916, the following resolution on the Jewish question was adopted:

Whereas under present war conditions the Jewish question to some extent assumes international significance . . . this conference deems it necessary to draw the attention of the workers of the world to this circumstance, so that the demands for equal civil, political, and national rights for Jews be incorporated in the peace program of the Socialist International.

At a conference of the Poale Zion in April 1916, Jewish demands were formulated in the following terms:

Upon termination of the present world war, the International must endeavor with all its power to secure the incorporation into the peace treaty of a provision for equal rights in those countries where discriminatory laws prevail for Jewish national-political autonomy, especially in Russia, Poland, Galicia, Palestine and Romania; and for freedom of immigration and colonization for Jews in Palestine.



By the autumn of 1915 the entire territory of Congress Poland, Lithuania, White Russia, and a part of Latvia were occupied by the Germans. These were the regions where the vast majority of the Jewish workers and approximately half of the Jewish population of the Russian Empire lived. The occupied areas, which were economically tied to Russia proper, were thus deprived of the major market for their industrial products. Relief work for the unemployed and for war refugees became the primary concern of the Jewish community and political organizations. The Jewish labor organizations which had been established and which had resumed activity shortly after the arrival of the Germans who tolerated and even encouraged the labor organizations, devoted themselves chiefly to relief work. A large number of public kitchens, homes for children and co-operatives were established. Under the German occupation, moreover, some possibility of political action did exist. For instance, the Jewish Socialist parties could participate in elections to city councils in Poland in the summer of 1916. February 4, 1916, saw the publication of the renewed *Lebnsfragn* as a Bundist weekly edited by Vladimir Medem, who was released from the Tsarist prison by the Germans. Cultural activities received considerable attention. The struggle for a Jewish school system and for the official recognition of Yiddish as the national language claimed an increasingly important role in the efforts of the Jewish Socialist parties.

The German military government permitted the Bundist trade unions to conduct their activities. In 1916 the Poale Zion and the Zionist Socialist Worker's Party organized trade unions of their own. The first (still illegal) convention of the Polish Bund was held in December 1917.

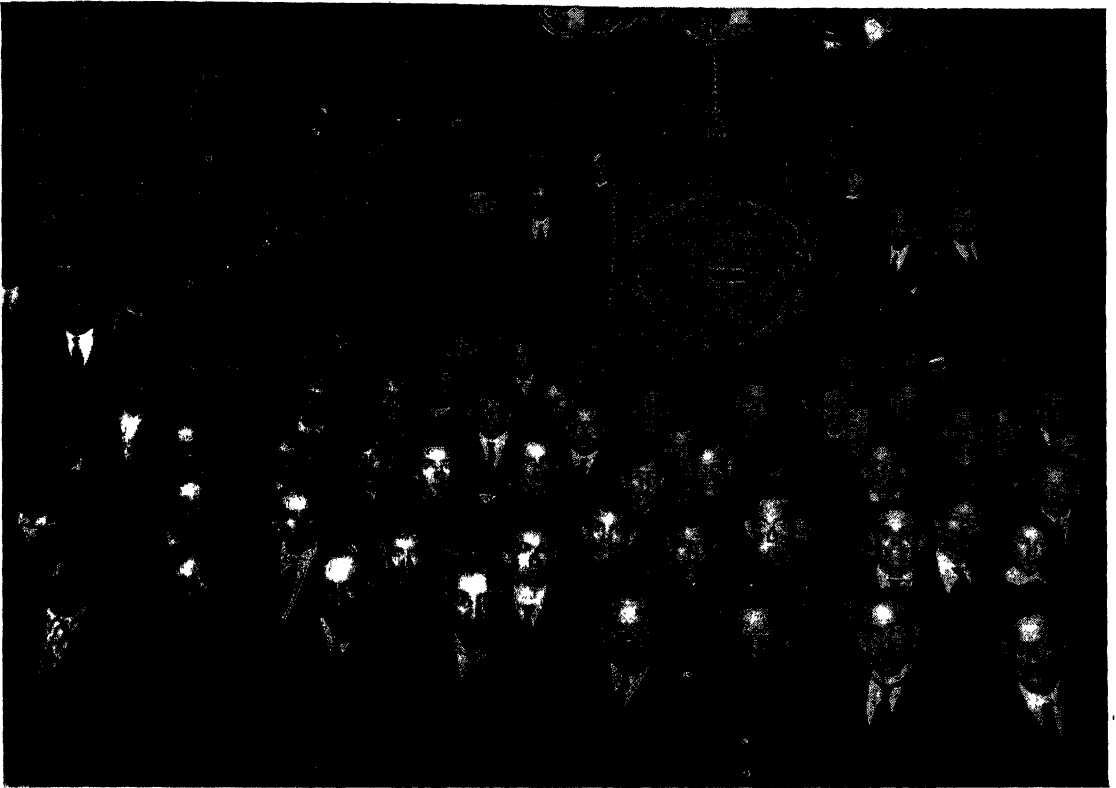
#### 4. THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917

From its outset the March Revolution again raised the question of hegemony of the socialist revolutionary parties. The semi-parliamentary system established in

1906-1907 proved incapable of surviving the hard blows of the war. The partially reformed administration of the Tsarist regime was unable to cope with the new situation created by the international conflict and precipitated by the tensions of war. The collapse of the Tsarist regime put an end to the domination of the class on which it relied. Bourgeois liberalism was likewise socially and politically incapable of undertaking and administering the necessary reconstruction of the entire country. The masses of the population followed the Socialist parties—the so-called “revolutionary democracy.”

The revival of the radical movement in the country was mirrored in the Jewish world also, and all the parties returned to the political scene. The Bund, the Zionist Socialist, the Jewish Socialist Party and the Poale Zion held conferences during the very first days of the Revolution. The radical intelligentsia once again hastened to the Socialist banners. But among the Jews, the non-Socialist elements were much stronger than they were in the general population and, although the Socialist parties took the lead, the liberal-democratic groups retained considerable power, as was demonstrated in elections to both Jewish and general political bodies.

Only a small part of the Jewish proletariat, which had experienced the struggle of 1905-1906, took part in the 1917 revolution. The majority of the Jewish workers were now outside Russia's new boundaries. Ideologically and politically the Jewish labor movement in Russia underwent the same evolution as the general proletariat, but at a different pace and in a different manner. The Revolution had immediately brought to the Jewish masses the realization of their most vital demands. On April 4, 1917, the Provisional Government, through its Minister of Justice, Alexander Kerensky, issued a decree granting full and equal rights to the Jewish population of Russia. For the first time in the history of Jewish emancipation, a Jewish community re-



EIGHTH CONVENTION OF THE BUND HELD IN PETROGRAD, DECEMBER 8-17, 1917

ceived not only civil and political but also national recognition. So badly were the very roots of the Tsarist system shattered that the full and complete equality of the Jews was realized in practice as well as in principle without any opposition.

This was one of the underlying factors in the change of outlook among the Jewish masses, and particularly among the workers. For the first time they felt that they were full-fledged citizens of Russia on a par with all others. The defeatism, which had been the natural response toward a regime typified by the Beilis trial, now gave way to a feeling of patriotism. Moreover, the Jewish working class was more party-conscious and better disciplined than the average Russian or Ukrainian worker; there were large masses of peasants who only a short while ago had moved from the villages to the cities and factories. Thus the Jewish workers resisted the pressure of revolutionary maximalism for a longer time than non-

Jewish labor. The majority of the Bund, as well of the labor Zionists, gave their support after the Revolution to the *oborontsy*, who favored the continuation of the war against Germany and her allies. The "internationalists" were, on the whole, much weaker than the combined forces of the right-wing Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries. As for the Bolsheviks, in the early months of the Revolution, they attracted but a negligible part of the Jewish working class.

Both the tenth conference of the Bund (held in Petrograd in April 1917), the United Jewish Socialist Workers' Party (a merger of the Zionist Socialists and the Jewish Socialists, effected at a joint conference in June 1917), and the Poale Zion (by a resolution passed in April) fully endorsed the "defensivist" viewpoint of the *oborontsy* and supported the policies of the Provisional Government. When the October Revolution took place, the representatives

of all three Jewish Socialist Parties protested and left the second Congress of Soviets, which endorsed Bolshevik seizure of power. For a relatively long time, the Jewish Socialist continued their struggle against the new regime, calling for a coalition government of all the Socialist parties, endorsing the slogan of the Constituent Assembly and issuing determined protests against its dissolution in January 1918. It was only after a series of party splits that a part of the Jewish labor movement was won over by the victorious Communists.

The November 1918, revolutions in Germany and Austria, the civil war in Russia, and the national and social struggle in the Ukraine which was accompanied by terrible pogroms, produced a marked shift to the left in the Jewish Socialist movement. Yet the "bolshevization" of the Jewish labor movement proceeded at a relatively slow pace.

The first to capitulate were some Bund organizations in the pogrom-ravaged Ukraine. At the beginning of 1919, the pro-communist members of the Ukrainian Bund under the leadership of M. Rafes left the Party and established themselves as an independent party under the name of "The Communist Bund" (*Kombund*). The communist wing of the "United Party" seceded a few weeks later and formed The United Communist Party. Both organizations merged at a joint conference on May 22, 1919, and formed the Komfarband, which in turn in August of the same year, joined the general Communist Party of the Ukraine.

In March, 1919, an all-Russian conference (the eleventh conference) of the Bund was held at Minsk. After heated and passionate debates the conference adopted by majority vote a resolution stating that the Bund had decided to accept the "platform of a soviet government." At the same time, however, the conference condemned the terrorist practices of the Communist party and called for democratization of the Soviets and for freedom of speech and press. After the interlude of a special con-

ference in Homel, in October 1919, the twelfth conference of the Bund was assembled in Moscow in April 1920.

At this conference to which some of the delegates were unable to arrive in time because of transportation difficulties—the majority adopted an outspoken communist platform; the minority, however, remained faithful to the Bund's traditional Social Democratic orientation and beliefs. The minority withdrew from the conference in a dramatic exit and consequently formed the "Social Democratic Bund." The Communist wing, led by Aaron Weinstein (Rachmiel), Esther Frumkin, Yankel Levin and others, decided to join the All-Russian Communist Party; they wanted to affiliate as an autonomous organization, however, and were therefore rejected by the Bolshevik party. They appealed to the Communist International and in February 1921 had to accept the verdict of a special committee of the Comintern that the Bund was to be liquidated as an autonomous party. Accordingly, its members joined the "Yev-sektsia," the Yiddish language section of the All-Union Communist Party.

The Social Democratic Bund, about which many of the old leaders, such as Issay Yudin (Aisenstadt), A. Litvak, Mark Liber, R. Abramovitch, Rosa Levit, Binsky, G. Aronson, rallied, attempted to maintain its existence as a legal political party. But in several months, especially after Lenin's proclamation of the "New Economic Policy" (NEP) with simultaneous liquidation of all Socialist parties in the Soviet Union, the organization became a victim of police persecution and eventually was destroyed. Thus ended the eventful existence of the Bund in Russia. The center of the Jewish labor movement shifted to Poland which in 1919 became an independent Republic.

The other Jewish Socialist parties followed, in general, the pattern established by the Bund: split in the party,—with the majority joining the Bolsheviks, and the minority gradually liquidated by Communist terrorism.

##### 5. WAR, REVOLUTION, AND THE JEWISH QUESTION

The war and the Russian Revolution radically changed the entire situation of the nearly six million Jews previously found within the boundaries of the Russian Empire. For a time, large areas of the Jewish Pale were occupied by the German army.

In 1917 it seemed as if the two most important movements in Jewish life, Zionism and the Bund, had reached the threshold of realizing their programs. The Balfour Declaration gave the Jewish people the solemn assurance of a national home in Palestine, whereas the Russian Revolution seemed to foreshadow almost ideal conditions for the attainment not only of full civil rights but also of cultural autonomy. The tenth conference of the Bund, held shortly before the March Revolution of 1917, adopted the following resolution: "In full agreement with the program regarding the national question, adopted at the sixth convention of the Bund, the tenth conference proposes as a timely slogan the immediate realization of the demand for national-cultural autonomy." The same gathering also voted to take part in the Jewish Assembly scheduled for December. The principal task of that conference, as formulated by the Bund's Central Committee, was "to give serious and public expression to the desire of all the Jews in Russia for national self-determination." It is important to note that the Bund (at the Kharkov conference of 1916 as well as later) took the position that the Jewish question "must be considered as an international question" and must be solved "not in one country, but in all countries in which Jews live."

The Poale Zion and the United Party went beyond a demand for cultural autonomy and formulated a program including political autonomy as well: such matters as emigration, labor mediation, social security, colonization of Palestine, and the like, were to be included within the jurisdiction of

the autonomous Jewish organs. The Poale Zion also waged a strong campaign in the Socialist International for its demands regarding Palestine, and was able to achieve some success. The proposals of the Poale Zion were incorporated in the "Peace Manifesto" of the so-called "Scandinavian Committee" of October 1917. The British Labour Party likewise endorsed Zionism, in agreement with the official British policy of that time.

In 1917 the national question in Russia had become a good deal more pressing and real than in the prewar period. The war had intensified the national aspirations of the central and Eastern European nationalities. The principle of national self-determination was beginning to be generally recognized. Separatist tendencies among the Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Georgians and Armenians were constantly growing stronger. At the very beginning of the revolution, Poland was declared independent, and Finland, too, was to regain full freedom. The groups that played a leading role in the first stage of the Russian Revolution, the Social Democrats and the Socialist Revolutionaries, sought to save the unity of the Russian State through concessions designed to satisfy the national aspirations of the non-Russian minorities without endangering the maintenance of a common state. For this reason the Bund's program of cultural autonomy now acquired greater popularity in non-Jewish Socialist circles. At the first Congress of Soviets, in June 1917, Mark Liber and Raphael Abramovitch were the official spokesmen on the national question. The Bundist principle of territorial self-determination and extra-territorial cultural autonomy was incorporated in the platform of the Social Democratic Party in the elections to the Constituent Assembly. The first attempt to translate the demand for national autonomy into practice was made in the Ukraine, largely through the efforts of the Jewish Socialist parties. On January 9, 1918, the Ukrainian National Rada adopted a law on minority rights giving "each of the na-

tions living in the Ukraine . . . within the boundaries of the Ukrainian People's Republic, the right of national personal autonomy." According to this law, each nationality was to constitute a community with appropriate representative bodies. M. Silberfarb, the representative of the United Party, became the first Minister for Jewish affairs. But Jewish autonomy in the Ukraine was not destined to become reality. The political developments of 1918-1919 made the formal functioning of Jewish national organs practically impossible. Nonetheless, in the midst of the catastrophe, considerable accomplishments were made in the field of Jewish culture. The many-sided and admirable work of the Cul-

ture League, carried on principally by the Jewish Socialist parties, deserves specific mention in this connection.

At the elections of the Jewish National Assembly in the Ukraine, held in November 1918, 209,128 votes were cast. The Bund received 37,704; the United Party, 19,689; Poale Zion, 18,416. All three Socialist parties together received approximately 37 per cent of the votes cast. The middle class bloc and the Socialists differed mostly on the language question (Hebrew versus Yiddish) and on the concrete forms of self-government (religious or secular communities). The Socialists, being in the minority, were not included in the executive body elected at this Assembly.

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# THE JEWISH LABOR MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

J. C. Rich

## INTRODUCTION

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- II. EARLY SOCIAL STRIVINGS
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## INTRODUCTION

Jewish labor on the North American continent is now so intimate and integral a part of the general American labor community that it is not possible to trace its outlines with precision and determine where its borderlines begin and end. Ethnic factors, the accidents of geographic and industrial grouping, but more than anything else, the traditions and conceptions of social, political and economic morality give Jewish labor its distinguishing characteristics.

The trade unions, established by Jewish workers, are the basic component of the somewhat shapeless but very lively entity termed the Jewish Labor Movement. These unions have not only been fully accepted but given places of distinction in the general labor movement of America. They are also highly regarded by both the community and government as instruments for the advancement of public welfare.

This was not the case when Jewish immigrants made their imprint on American labor and the American economy. There was a time when Jewish workers were considered "impossible" to organize and hostile to the aims and aspirations of trade unionism. Locals of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, the Brotherhood of Painters and Decorators, the Journeymen Tailors' Union, the Hat Finishers' Association and other unions refused to admit Jews, not because of an invidious hostility toward them, but because of an erroneous impression that Jews disliked unions, did not want to accept the discipline that went with them, were used to a lower standard of living and, therefore, willing to work below the established wage scales, thus undermining the conditions for which the unions had fought so arduously. With similar error, some Jewish trade unionists at one time held that it was impossible to organize women workers, Italian workers, or workers of native American stock—prejudices which only the course of experience has managed to overcome.

When, finally, Jewish workers did succeed in downing the prejudice against them and even managed to build unions of their own, they were confronted with a double handicap: they were both Jews and trade unionists. A celebrated case in point was the dictum of a magistrate in New York who sentenced a picket to jail in the shirtwaist strike of 1909. In proclaiming the sentence Magistrate Olmstead stated: "You are on strike against God and Nature, whose firm law is that man shall earn his bread in the sweat of his brow. You are on strike against God."

## I. THE SWEATSHOP

The sweatshop was the industrial locale in which Jewish workers in the needle trades in the eighties, nineties and 1900's earned their bread by the sweat of their brow. The sweatshop was generally not a shop at all or, at least, not a plant designed and equipped for industrial production. Often, it was no more than the tenement residence of the entrepreneur, himself only one stage removed from the poverty and misery prevailing among his employees. The New York State factory inspector, in his Annual Report for 1893, stated that "the cloak trade, which is a distinct branch of manufacture, relies almost solely upon tenement and sweatshop workers." A typical shop as he described it was that "of a cloakmaker, who used one room for his shop while the other three were supposed to be used for domestic purposes only, his family consisting of his wife and seven children. In the room adjoining the shop, used as a kitchen, there were a red-hot stove, two tables, a clothes rack, and several piles of goods. A woman was making bread on a table upon which there was a baby's stocking, scraps of cloth, several old tin cans, and a small pile of unfinished garments. In the next room there was an old woman . . . walking the floor with a crying child in her arms."

A shop in which women's dainty undergarments were made could be found in the back yard of a livery stable on the East side of New York. Girls arriving at work had to make their way to the shop over piles of manure, the stench of which in summer was hard to endure.

Many of the tenement shops were the residences not only of the contractor but also of some of his employees, for rarely was there a family among the immigrant population that could afford to pay its rent without the aid of one or more boarders. Those in a position to maintain a residence out of their own incomes still frequently accepted lodgers, feeling a moral compulsion to give at least temporary asylum to a rela-

tive or *landsmen* newly arrived from the old country. The folding cot and upholstered couch which at night served as beds were standard equipment in many a shop, even more so than the sewing machine. It is a revealing commentary on the state of the needle trades in the eighties and nineties that sewing machines were supplied not by the employer but by the workers. An employee changing jobs would have to trundle his machine from shop to shop. When electricity replaced foot power, workers were generally charged the cost of the current. They also had to supply their own needles and thread, and so widely accepted was this custom that when one of the early unions of Jewish workers, the Capmakers' Union, demanded that employers supply machines and findings, there were workers who objected to the demand. "What will we do if the boss gives us bad machines and poor thread?" they asked. "We won't be able to produce as much as we do with our own materials, and our wages will suffer."

Hours and wages were on a par with other conditions of work in the sweatshops. In New York City the hours in "inside" shops were generally sixty per week. In the "outside" shops, in the tenement residences of the contractors, they were whatever the human system could endure. During the busy season, there was no limit whatever to the number of hours, and men would frequently snatch a few hours of uneasy sleep on the bundles of cloth and unfinished garments in the work room in order to set to work before dawn the following day. Five o'clock was the commonly-accepted starting time, and nine in the evening found the shop still busy.

The wages were those established by an intensely competitive labor market. Skilled craftsmen earned as much as twelve dollars a week in the cloak trade in 1885, but learners and apprentices usually had to be satisfied with nothing or next to nothing until they were "broken in." Among the great tides of Jewish immigration that reached the shores of the United States,

there were many apprentices eager for the opportunity of acquiring a trade, so that the wages of the previous arrivals were constantly in danger of being lowered. "In explaining these conditions," a historian of the needle trades relates, "investigators generally took the view that the sweatshop was the result of the inferior standards introduced by the immigrants. Some even declared the sweatshop to be a special Jewish institution explicable by the racial and national characteristics of the Jewish workers . . ."

However, the sweatshop was neither a Jewish nor an immigrant invention. It already existed in the British textile mills—not only for native Englishmen or adult workers, but even for children. In the United States, too, the steel industry was one huge sweatshop, grinding the workers with exhausting toil twelve hours a day, seven days a week.

Moreover, for correct appraisal, it must be noted that the sweatshop in the "Jewish" trades was not a place of unrelieved misery. Social contacts and concern for one another's personal problems eased the toilsome day. Hours were long, and yet workers found time to attend night school, preparatory schools and even institutions for higher education. Many of the men who later gained eminence in the professions were graduates of shirt factories, cap shops and cigarette factories. Wages were low, and yet Jewish workers managed to save enough money to make at least a down payment on a *shifskarte*, a steerage ticket to bring their families into the country. The boarders slept on folding cots, two and three to a room; they breakfasted on stale rolls and cups of coffee, and sustained themselves on the free lunch of the beer saloon or the hash of a ten-cent meal; they walked miles from their homes to the shops and back in order to save carfare; they scrimped on clothing and shoes. But gradually they accumulated the few dollars necessary to establish homes of their own for their newly-arrived families.

The poverty, the long hours, the sweat-

shop were landmarks of this period. No less significant, however, were the social and cultural strivings of the Jewish immigrant workers. It is impossible to give an adequate account of the economic history of the Jews in the United States, or of the Jewish labor movement, unless the story of the great social and cultural stirrings is told together with that of the trade unions. For among Jewish immigrants in the United States, the limited and fairly personalized interests of trade unionism walked hand in hand with the selfless idealism of the political and social movements seeking the betterment of human existence.

## II. EARLY SOCIAL STRIVINGS

An appraisal of the Jewish labor movement in the United States must take into account first, the Socialist and radical ideologies and emotional attitudes which grasped the imagination of the immigrants who thronged to the new land; second, the cultural strivings which produced the Yiddish press, theater and literature, and third, the organizations out of which grew the powerful trade unions that eventually formed the backbone of the Jewish labor movement. Chronologically, one element may at one time or another have been ahead of the others, but in historical perspective it can be said that Jewish labor developed thus: first, there were the politico-economic philosophies; second, the cultural ascent and third, the development of the trade unions. Institutions such as the Workmen's Circle, the Jewish National Workers' Alliance, the People's Relief, the Jewish Labor Committee, and many other temporary and permanent organizations arose together out of the same milieu, each contributing its share of thought, activity or confusion to the movement, all of them making Jewish immigrant life in the United States richer and more colorful.

Jewish mass immigration into the United States came in two tides. The first reached its peak in the eighties and nineties; the second, in the decade between 1904 and the beginning of World War I. Each brought



different sections of the Jewish population. Amongst the first group a large number came from the depressed areas of Romania, Hungary and Austrian Galicia, where they had suffered not only from discriminatory laws but also from economic deprivation. In their new homeland the immigrants sought bread even more than freedom. However little there was, it was still more than they would have had if they had stayed in the communities from which they now fled. The sweatshop provided work and some kind of livelihood. If one worked hard enough, was alert and took advantage of the opportunities the Golden Land offered, one could prosper and then send for one's family and relatives. Slack seasons and economic crises were disastrous, but they were, after all, visitations of an accidental nature against which the individual could do little. There were Socialists and Anarchists who preached strangely about uniting against the capitalist exploiters and oppressors, but their theories were difficult to apply to immediate experience. There were, of course, some unions, but few Jews belonged to them. The Jewish cloakmakers, shirtmakers, capmakers, cigar and cigarette workers felt, finally, that it would be a good thing to have a union in their own shops, and occasionally an entire shop spontaneously quit work or refused to show up in the tenement workroom. The employer, however, knew where to find the absentees. He would seek them out, haggle with them about new piece-rates for the season and come to an agreement. The shop would return to work. Soon the newly-formed "union" would disintegrate, and no trace of it be left by the end of the season.

Interspersed among the half-a-million Jews who came to the United States at the end of the last century, was a small number of intellectuals, most of them deeply aroused by the pogroms and outbreaks of virulent anti-Semitism in Russia. Among them were the founders of the *Am Olam* (Eternal People) group, who undertook to establish co-operative communities on the pattern of

Robert Owen's utopias. Difficulties caused by lack of experience led to internal frictions and broke up these colonies among the Jews just as among non-Jews, and the idealistic colonists returned to New York and other big cities to take up work in the sweatshops and to find fields for their social and cultural activities. It was these idealists who aroused in their immigrant neighbors the first impulse toward cultural and social advancement, and who provided both teachers and leaders for the labor movement that was to develop. Amongst the men who were to become outstanding in the Jewish community, there were such names as Alexander Harkavy, Abraham Cahan, Dr. Abraham Caspe, Bernard Weinstein, M. Zametkin, David Edelstadt, Dr. H. Solotaroff and N. Aleinikov. It was this group who, in the summer of 1882, formed the first Jewish Socialist organization in this country, the so-called Propaganda Society, whose aim was the propagation of the ideal of socialism among the Jewish masses.

The Propaganda Society, which functioned for about a year as a debating club, was in 1885 replaced by other organizations of the same character: first, by the Russian-Jewish Workers' Society, and then by the Jewish Workers' Society (April 1885). The latter, which came into being as a result of the merger of the Russian-Jewish Workers' Society with the Romanian-Galician Jewish Union, had the definite objective of forming trade unions of Jewish workers. This organization achieved considerable success, and by the end of the year it had founded 14 Jewish unions with a membership of 3,000. This was not an inconsiderable number in the days when the Knights of Labor, one of the first union organizations on a national scale, had passed its zenith, and the American Federation of Labor (its rival) had already begun its activities.

In 1886 the Jewish unions joined with the Socialist Labor Party and the general trade unions in support of Henry George who was running for Mayor of New York on the ticket of the United Labor Party. But since most of the immigrants were still

not naturalized, their support could merely be moral. In the same year, the Jewish Worker's Society organized the Anti-Sweating League to combat the sweatshop evil, and succeeded in enlisting the active help of a number of social reformers and liberal legislators.

This promising beginning remained static, and a year later the Jewish Workers' Society and its affiliated trade unions disintegrated as an economic crisis descended upon the land and factional strife among the Jewish radicals sundered their forces.

The chief groups among the radicals at that time were the Socialists and the Anarchists. The latter were numerically stronger for a time, particularly after the Haymarket tragedy in Chicago in 1886, when the persecution of Anarchists set in. The glory of martyrdom attached itself to them, and they organized a Propaganda Society in New York called the "Pioneers of Freedom." In 1887 the Jewish Socialists in their turn organized Branch 8 of the Socialist Labor Party to halt the influence of the Anarchists upon the ranks of Jewish labor. The chief activity of Branch 8 consisted of arranging weekly programs of lectures, debates and literary recitations—functions which were always well-attended by a populace hungry for diversion and cultural growth.

The Socialists, particularly in Branch 8, realized the importance of trade unionism more than the Anarchists; they felt that Socialism would remain an abstraction unless they could find a firm foundation of trade unionism on which to build their social edifice. In 1888, therefore, the Socialists moved to organize a federation of Jewish unions despite the fact that no such unions of any substance as yet existed. At a conference called in October of that year, only two unions joined the federation, the Jewish printers and the Jewish choristers. Also participating in that conference were representatives of the Hebrew Actors' Union, the Russian Branch 17 of the Socialist Labor Party, the *Deutsche Gewerkschaften*, and the editor of the German

Socialist publication, W. Rosenberg. The German Socialists were helpful both morally and financially. They themselves already had substantial unions, all of them Socialist in character, and were eager to help their Jewish comrades. The Jewish Socialists borrowed the name for their labor federation from the Germans, and the newly-formed organization came to be called *Di Fareinigte Yidishe Geverkshafte*, known to this day by that name and by its English version, *The United Hebrew Trades*.

It is a commentary on the times that the founding fathers of the United Hebrew Trades were Socialist Party spokesmen rather than trade unionists in the strict sense of the word. It is significant also that the trade union elements in the *Geverkshafte* at their formation were not needleworkers who would have been representative of the greater number of Jewish immigrants, but printers and, of all professions, chorus men of the Jewish theater.

The officers elected at the founding conference of the *Geverkshafte* were Bernard Weinstein, Recording Secretary, and Morris Hillquit (Hilkowitch), Corresponding Secretary. The former was to become the tireless organizer of Jewish workers in trade unions, and the latter, the outstanding Socialist thinker of the United States, a brilliant labor lawyer, and a man of unequalled acumen in the councils of the Jewish labor movement.

It was natural that the Socialists took the lead in organizing the unions that followed the first two into the fold of the *Geverkshafte*. Among the early ones there were the shirtmakers. This union contained the very élite of the New York East Side intellectuals. Most of them drifted into this trade because it was simple to learn and easy to combine with their schooling and political activity. A shirtmaker worked by the piece or the dozen pieces, and so could stop work whenever he pleased. Quite a number of physicians, dentists, lawyers, poets and writers came from the ranks of the shirtmakers. Among the first members of

the Shirtmakers' Union were Morris Hillquit, M. Zametkin, Louis Miller, R. Lewis, I. Magidow, Dr. Liubitch, and others who were later to make their mark in the arts and professions.

The unions that quickly followed were the knee-pants makers, the pants makers, the actors, bakers and capmakers. The capmakers joined the *Geverkshafte*n in 1889 after several rebuffs to the Hebrew Trades. They had already had a fairly well-knit union, but a disastrous strike that year had reduced their membership to no more than 30. These 30 were assembled at a meeting one evening, discussing the dissolution of their union. It was proposed that the small sum of money remaining in the treasury be donated to a hospital, but before a decision was taken a committee of the *Geverkshafte*n entered and asked to be heard. Joseph Barondess, a man of persuasive oratory, was a member of this committee and at the conclusion of the deliberations, the capmakers decided to make one more try. A novel means was proposed to attract their fellow craftsmen to a gathering—a banquet. It was addressed by Abraham Cahan and other leading Socialists and was a huge success. The capmakers union was saved, and despite its limited size, it finally became one of the key organizations in the Jewish labor movement.

Simultaneously with this trade union activity the yeast of radical propaganda was fermenting among the immigrants. By a quirk of fate, those who sought to unite labor were themselves divided on matters of ideology. The Socialists stressed the value of political action. The Anarchists believed in a syndicalist state, a society consisting of economic rather than political units. Long and numerous debates showed that, on the whole, the sympathies of the majority of the immigrants tended toward the Socialists.

Both factions knew the value and felt the need of a press to propagate their views and to promote mass organization. Both lacked the funds, however, for anything more than

the sporadic appearance of their organs. In 1889 the Anarchists and Socialists permitted the logic of their common need to overcome their ideological differences and called a joint conference for the creation of an "impartial" labor newspaper. The conference lasted six days. On the last day the sessions ended in a bitter division and the Socialists left to hold a convention of their own. The existing unions joined them, and together they decided to raise a fund for a weekly publication. This was entitled *Di Arbeter Tsaitung* (The Workers' Paper) and made its first appearance in March 1890. The Anarchists, at their convention, made a similar decision, and their paper, *Di Freie Arbeter Shtime* (The Free Workers' Voice) began publication in July 1890. Philip Krantz was brought from London to edit the Socialist weekly. The Anarchists, in a bow to the idea of "impartiality," had two editors, R. Lewis for the Anarchist, and Isaac A. Hourwich for the Socialist editorial contents. A year later, the Socialists established a monthly journal in addition to their weekly, and in January 1892, *Di Zukunft* (The Future) made its appearance as a magazine of serious literary and theoretical discussion.

Meanwhile, unions of needleworkers became progressively stronger and a need was felt for an organ of expression and daily communication. At the same time, the immigration of Jews into the United States was on the increase, and as the newcomers crowded into the tenements and sweatshops they also created a demand for a newspaper that would speak their language and give expression to their trials and difficulties. In 1893, therefore, the Socialists founded a Yiddish daily, funds for which were raised from contributions by devoted party members and the then existing unions, among them also the German Socialist unions. October 14, 1894, saw the first issue of the *Abendblatt* (The Evening Journal), the first Socialist Yiddish daily in the United States. Its editor was Philip Krantz, and among its contributors in the days that followed were Abraham Cahan, Dr. Abra-



LEADERS OF THE JEWISH LABOR MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

1. Ab. Cahan (B. 1860, 2. B. Feigenbaum (1860-1932), 3. S. Yanofsky (1864-1939), 4. B. Weinstein (1866-1946), 5. M. London (1871-1926), 6. B. Schlesinger (1876-1932), 7. A. Shiplacoff (1878-1934), 8. B. C. Vladeck. (1886-1938).

ham Caspe, Morris Vinchevsky, B. Feigenbaum, M. Baranov, and many others.

The *Abendblatt* enjoyed a moderate success, and nothing less than the tempests that shook the entire Socialist movement could precipitate the end which finally came three years later. The break came when the majority of Jewish Socialists and trade unionists found the domineering tactics of Daniel DeLeon, head of the Socialist Labor Party, intolerable. DeLeon, a Columbia University professor and fanatical Socialist, a man of considerable personal magnetism and a talent for factional politics, had quickly won a dominant position in the Socialist Labor Party, but his extreme intolerance gradually drove his adherents from him. He installed his own men in positions of leadership in the dying Knights of Labor. At the same time he conducted a violent campaign against the American Federation of Labor and its President, Samuel Gompers.

The Knights of Labor, with its ceremonials, passwords and symbols, eventually degenerated into a body practising common scabbing and corruption. When grafting officials of the Knights refused to abide by DeLeon's directives, he organized the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance against both the Knights of Labor and the A. F. of L. The Alliance made considerable headway in New York City and might have achieved stability had it not been for the intolerance of its leader. DeLeon's Alliance organized opposition unions which it did not hesitate to use even for outright strike-breaking. It was on this final violation of labor morals that the majority of Jewish Socialists broke with DeLeon. The opposition to him took formal shape when in January 1897, at an annual meeting of the publishing society in charge of the *Abendblatt*, 52 members walked out and established their own publishing association. It took them several months to raise the funds necessary for an independent labor organ, but on April 22, 1897, the paper was on the streets. It was called the *Forverts* (Jewish Daily Forward), and is

published to this day. Its editor was, and still is Abraham Cahan, a man who has left an indelible mark on the Jewish labor movement in the United States. The *Forverts* might also have succumbed in those early days, had it not been for the tenacity and self-sacrificing devotion of its founders and adherents. It served as an instrument of propaganda and enlightenment, both in labor and cultural affairs, among the Jewish immigrants. Socialist in its political and economic concepts, it did not limit its interests to purely labor or party dogmas, but extended its horizon to include every aspect of Jewish and American life.

With the sweatshop as the goad, the Socialists and Anarchists supplying the leadership and the *Forverts* acting as their mouthpiece, the unions of the Jewish immigrants began to take shape and to expand in form and influence. One other thing was needed to give impetus to the movement, the influx of a new wave of migration.

### III. THE NEW MIGRATION

The new migration was different from the previous one in origin, numbers, and what may be termed quality. It began in 1903, reached a high peak in 1906 and 1907 and continued with floodlike impetus until World War I checked it. During those 12 years, over 1,270,000 East-European immigrants came to the United States. After the war, restrictive legislation, with its discriminatory quotas against East-European immigrants, reduced further additions to the Jewish immigrant population in the United States to a minimum, and by that process alone Jewish life and the Jewish labor movement were given a new direction.

The mass immigration of Jews which began in 1903 stemmed from Russia. It was a spontaneous reaction against the Kishinev pogrom, inspired and sponsored by the Tsarist Government, and against the whole system of discrimination and persecution in Russia. Among the new immigrants to the United States, there were thousands who

were imbued with revolutionary sentiments and Socialist ideals. In Russia and Poland they had belonged to the *Bund* (the Jewish Socialist Union), the *Poale Zion* (Labor Zionists), or to various other Socialist and anti-Tsarist groups, and they found an outlet for their spiritual and emotional energies in the Socialist and trade union movements in this country. Had the indigenous radical movement been large enough to absorb and acclimatize them to American conditions, their contribution to American labor and society could have been organic and immediate. But because the Socialist movement was both weak and itself dominated by groups of German and other foreign stock, the activities of the Jewish immigrants from Russia served only to strengthen the foreign tinge of the movement. Hostility to the conservative A. F. of L. was a matter of course with these new arrivals. They took the political and social liberties prevalent in the new country for granted and considered them hardly an adequate compensation for the economic hardships they suffered. They felt, therefore, that their ideologies provided the only answer to the problems that beset the laborer in the capitalist world.

It was natural then for Jewish immigrants to gravitate to groupings speaking the same language and having the same ideologies. Those with strong nationalistic aspirations formed a Socialist-Zionist Organization in 1903, and after the cleavage in 1905 they separated into Socialist-Territorialists, whose tenet was that any available territory would be suitable for the creation of a Jewish homeland, and the *Poale Zion*, who maintained that only Palestine could be the country for such a Jewish state. The Bundist elements formed their own group, maintained contact with the underground organization in Russia and Poland, and brought over from abroad a number of their party leaders. They also played a dominant role in the Jewish Socialist Federation which was formed in 1912, several years after the Socialist Party permitted the crea-

tion of autonomous "foreign" federations in its midst.

These rather narrowly-limited and partisan activities reflected the emotional attitude of only a small number of the hundreds of thousands who were arriving here with every incoming transatlantic boat. For every immigrant who was formally a member of the Socialist Party, there were scores who were sympathetic and responsive to its message. The *Forverts* made this message simple and effective. The enemy was the capitalist class. The union and the party were the weapons the working class needed to combat and defeat the enemy. The union and the party, the union and the ballot were labor's prime necessities, and whereas the ballot could be obtained only by a lengthy process of naturalization, the union was an objective that could be achieved immediately. The first decade of this century was, therefore, the period of the great upsurge of both unionism and Socialism among the Jewish masses of the United States.

#### IV. THE INTERNATIONAL LADIES' GARMENT WORKERS' UNION

Since most of the Jewish immigrants found employment in the apparel industry, it was natural that the Jewish unions should grow out of the needle trades. Already at the turn of the century, there was a nucleus of leadership, trained in the ways of trade unionism and the conducting of strikes. However, this leadership was frequently divided because of ideological and personal differences. Thus, in the case of the cloak-makers, while industrial developments favored the establishment of a strong union, the division between the adherents of Joseph Barondess, an organizer of the cloak-makers in 1890, and his opponents militated against it.

Disagreements among the Barondess adherents, the DeLeonists, the Socialists, the "Kangaroos" (Socialists who had broken away from DeLeon, but who had not joined the *Forverts* partisans), and the Anarchists held these labor-conscious groups within

the grip of wasted effort. That any union at all survived despite these differences is testimony to the innate need for organization as dictated by the logic of economics and the self-interest of the cloakmakers. By 1889 the cloakmakers possessed a union with a substantial but not yet commanding influence in the trade. It was called the United Brotherhood of Cloakmakers, Number 1 of New York and Vicinity. Its call for a national convention was heeded by cloak and skirt locals in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Newark and New York (including Brownsville, a section of Brooklyn, N. Y., to which Jewish immigrants thronged as they later did to the Borough of the Bronx). The convention assembled in New York in June 1900, selected the name of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (I.L.G.W.U.), adopted a union label, elected officers, and decided to affiliate with the A. F. of L.

The first officers of the I.L.G.W.U. were Herman Grossman, President, and Bernard Braff, Secretary. Great importance was attached to the union label which the men's clothing workers in the United Garment Workers of America had found to be an effective instrument of labor. In the field of women's apparel, however, the label proved disappointing.

Together with this union activity profound changes were taking place in the apparel trades. There was an expansion of the industry which affected every element in it, including the laboring masses. This was a prosperous period in the national economy, a boom that was to collapse with the crisis of 1907. Meanwhile, new and aggressive elements were forcing their way into the manufacturing end of the needle industry. They were not of great importance at first, these impecunious Jewish immigrants from Russia and Poland, small businessmen who, with courage, ambition and tireless application, started contracting shops and branched out into cloak and dress manufacturing of their own. They dispensed with every luxury, all the show and front that

the German-Jewish manufacturers used, and instituted a mass production system which, for the first time, gave American women attractive garments at a low cost. Little has been told about this facet of Jewish immigrant achievement, but it was to have a profound effect on both employers and employees in the needle trades.

The immediate result of the changes in the organization of the apparel industry was that they created a demand for labor and provided employment for the Jewish immigrants. By and large, these immigrants remained in New York, and the unceasing influx of learners and semi-skilled workers served to depress the wages and working conditions of those already in the shops. It is for this reason that at the beginning New York, the center of the garment industry, was weakest in union organization, whereas locals of the I.L.G.W.U. in San Francisco, Chicago, Cleveland and other cities were sufficiently strong to enforce a 9-hour day and maintain a stable dues-paying membership. In Cleveland, in 1903, two emissaries of the I.L.G.W.U., Benjamin Schlesinger and Joseph Barondess, even succeeded in making an agreement with one of the largest cloak firms in the country, Printz-Biederman and Co. Schlesinger, an ardent Socialist and *Forverts* adherent, came from Chicago and was elected President of the I.L.G.W.U. at its 1903 convention. The following year, however, when the western locals had been weakened by a series of lockouts and strikes, he was displaced by James McCauley, a cutters' delegate. John Dyche, who was later to become a powerful leader in the union, was elected Secretary at the same convention. In 1905 the presidency reverted to Grossman, and both he and Dyche were the chief officers of the I.L.G.W.U. until 1907, when Mortimer Julian, a favorite son of the cutters, was elected President, Dyche remaining Secretary. The following year differences between the cutters and the other crafts came to such a pass that the former walked out of the 1908 convention. Rosenberg was elected

President by a gathering that was despondent over the state of its union.

The story of the Jewish unions in the various trades now became one of strikes, uprisings and revolts, with their accompanying lockouts, blacklists and anti-union discrimination. A concerted drive against all unionism by the National Association of Manufacturers, the Anti-Boycott League and similar employer-groups reduced membership in the A.F. of L. and had its effect on the I.L.G.W.U., particularly on its locals outside New York; for employers in the needle trades interpreted the union shop as nothing else than a disguised form of closed shop, against which they were adamant.

#### V. INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD (I.W.W.)—DUALISM

At this time of general confusion a new labor group arose which diverted the attention and dissipated the forces of the newly-organized Jewish labor movement. This was the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) which had come from the West with a syndicalist ideology. It had inherited the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance with the traditions of DeLeonism, and set about organizing opposition unions in the Jewish trades. The I.W.W. did not hesitate to condemn even the idealistic cloak and shirt-waist unions as "reactionary" merely because they owed allegiance to the A.F. of L. The fact that their allegiance was no more than formal and that within the A.F. of L. the needle trade unions formed an intransigent bloc did not cleanse these unions of their "reactionary" taint in the eyes of the I.W.W.

This dualism reached a suicidal point in the case of the capmakers. This union emerged from a disastrous 13-week lockout strike in 1904 with its membership intact. Despite the fact that it was dominated by DeLeon adherents, it was formally affiliated with the A.F. of L. and received substantial aid from it as well as from the *Forverts* during the strike. Herman Hinder was the head of the capmakers at this time. When

the call came to send delegates to the founding convention of the I.W.W. in 1905, Hinder sent the editor of the capmakers' journal, William Edlin, as representative. The latter brought back a negative report, and the union decided against affiliation with the new group. A number of dissident capmakers thereupon joined the I.W.W. and established a local of their own. The opposition became progressively more virulent and, in 1907, a year of financial panic and depression, when the capmakers' union was fighting for its life and engaged in a number of desperate strikes, the I.W.W. dual union sent its members past the picket lines into strike-bound shops to capture the jobs of the strikers. This outraged not only the capmakers, but the entire Socialist movement.

Max Zuckerman, a man of unimpeachable integrity, who had replaced Hinder as Secretary, wrote a pamphlet exposing I.W.W. tactics and calling on the radical labor movement to rid itself of "a scab agency with a radical label." The sympathies of the Jewish workers, for whom the revolutionary vocabulary and extremist program of the I.W.W. had had a special appeal, thereafter drifted away from this organization. The Socialist Party to which the I.W.W. had allied itself invoked its own discipline against the organization and stated that it would bear no official or moral responsibility for any group preaching or practising violence as a form of social or industrial policy. The decline of the I.W.W. among Jewish workers dates back to this episode. Although it eventually disappeared from the scene of Jewish labor, it left behind a number of men and women who were to be of great service to the movement. Among them were Morris Sigman, later to become President of the I.L.G.W.U., and Joseph Schlossberg, who became Secretary-Treasurer of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.

The industrial depression of 1907-1908 was a crushing blow to the apparel trades and to the unions which were arising in the needle industry. The Boston cloakmakers'



local, which only one year previously had claimed that every worker in the craft was a member, disappeared from the scene of organized labor in 1908. The Philadelphia local of shirtwaistmakers dwindled to no more than a handful of members. The cloakmakers local in the same city, blaming its troubles on lack of support from the national office, seceded from the International. At the same time the differences between the Jewish cloakmakers and the cutters, who were largely of German and Irish stock, came to a head in the expulsion of the cutters' Local 10 from the International and the resignation of Mortimer Julian, a Local 10 leader, from the presidency of the I.L.G.W.U. The fortunes of the International then reached their lowest ebb, and despairing voices counselled that it join with the United Garment Workers or liquidate itself. Only 38 delegates answered the roll call at the I.L.G.W.U. convention of 1908 in Philadelphia, most of them from New York and the convention city. Chicago, Baltimore and Cleveland were not represented because the skeleton organizations that existed there could not finance the journeys of their delegates. Some of the New York delegates made the trip partly by interurban trolley cars, partly on foot.

Upon their return from the convention in the summer of 1908, the delegates found neither their spirits nor their fortunes improved by developments in the trade. The financial panic that had descended on the nation in 1907 was reaching its nadir. Abroad, in Russia, reaction followed the failure of the 1905 revolution. Immigrants swarmed from politically oppressed Russia into the United States where an economic crisis was rapidly spreading. Thus they found neither economic nor spiritual relief in their new homeland. Again voices were heard in the New York locals of the cloakmakers demanding that the ship be abandoned, for it was becoming increasingly difficult to keep her afloat. There was no money to pay for the rent of the headquarters of the I.L.G.W.U.. The salaries of the

officers were months in arrears with no prospect of ever being paid.

But the union survived to provide the machinery for the great developments which were to be set in motion the following year.

## VI. THE GREAT STRIKES (1909-1910)

A realization of their own power that was finally to bring stability and permanence to the Jewish unions came to the needle trade workers during the extraordinary labor upheavals in 1909 and 1910. Until then the unionization of Jewish workers had proceeded by sporadic, and sometimes explosive, stages. Now it was to enter the stage of systematic, though no less explosive, development. Heralding the new period were several general strikes, which challenged the traditional relationship between employer and employee and established the right of workers to a voice and vote in regard to their wages and working conditions.

The first of these strikes was that of the ladies' shirtwaistmakers in 1909. In union nomenclature it has come to be known as the "Uprising of the 20,000," and, indeed, an uprising it was, even though the number of workers involved was nearer 15,000 than 20,000. It began with two localized shop strikes, one of them against an employer named Leiserson, the other against the Triangle Waist Company, a firm destined to enter into the folklore of Jewish immigrant life because of the tragic fire that occurred there in 1911. In October 1909, when the strikes were going badly because the firms involved were able to obtain their wares from other plants, the officers of the Waistmaker's Local 25 and the United Hebrew Trades began to toy with the idea of calling a "general" strike, one that is, embracing the entire industry. The local possessed neither membership nor funds at the time, and it was perhaps because it had so little to lose that its leadership was prepared to stake its all on what seemed to the International to be no more than a wild gamble. What the cautious leadership of the I.L.G.W.U. failed to take into account

was the spirit of restlessness that prevailed among the Jewish workers and the influence of Socialist thought, as disseminated by the *Forverts*, the newly-arrived Russian immigrants and the radical community of New York's East Side.

The spirit of revolt was abroad and the leadership of the United Hebrew Trades, imaginative as it was rash, used it to promote a total stoppage in all the shops of the industry. There followed a series of picket demonstrations around the Triangle shop, and the usual brutality on the part of the police and hired strikebreakers focused public attention on the waistmakers and gained thousands of members for their union. The tension rose and reached its climax with a meeting in Cooper Union which was filled to capacity and overflowed into the neighboring Beethoven Hall, Manhattan Lyceum and other auditoriums. The meeting took place on November 22, 1909, and the list of speakers was significant. B. Feigenbaum, Socialist theoretician and feature writer of the *Forverts*, was named Chairman, and his instructions were to keep the audience within moderate limits, for no one wished to assume the responsibility for so drastic a step as a general strike. But when a girl called Clara Lemlich, on strike at the Leiserson shop, rose to speak, the Chairman lost control of the meeting. Addressing the audience in Yiddish, she said: "I'm tired of these general speeches. What we are here for is to decide whether to strike or not. I move a resolution that a general strike be declared right now!"

Instantly the hall was filled with an uproar of approval. When it subsided, the chairman asked whether someone would second the resolution. Once again the entire audience leaped to their feet. At this point, in words as dramatic as they were characteristic of the emotional content of Jewish trade unionism in general, and of the waist and dressmakers in particular, the chairman cried: "Do you mean it with all your hearts and souls? Will you take the ancient Jewish vow with me?" Two thousand people raised their hands to recite the

oath: "If I turn traitor to the cause I now pledge, may this hand wither from the arm I now raise."

The next day the general strike was in full swing, the magnitude of the response overwhelming the union's tiny office on the fifth floor of Clinton Hall.

Amongst the leadership of the union there now appeared the names of men and women who were to play important roles in the movement: Abraham Baroff, Samuel Shindler, Sigmund Heiman, Benjamin Frishwasser, B. Witashkin, Elias Lieberman, Mollie Lifshitz, Morris Sigman, and many more. To aid them in the strike, volunteers came from the Socialist Party, the *Geverkschaften* and the Women's Trade Union League; among them were B. C. Vladeck, Louis Miller, Max Danish, I. Sackin, Salvatore Ninfo, Rose Pastor Stokes, Rose Schneiderman and Theresa Malkiel, as well as liberals who were friendly to labor, such as Professor E. R. A. Seligman, Lillian D. Wald, Ida M. Tarbell, Mary K. Simkhovitch, and others.

After the first few days of pandemonium, a measure of order was brought into the conduct of the strike. Public sympathy was with the strikers, but the police and blindly partisan magistrate courts sided with the employers. Moreover, the strength of the strikers waned on account of the severity of the winter and the return of the fainthearted to the shops as the strike dragged on from November through December and into the new year. A protest parade to City Hall on December 3 forced Mayor McClellan to take at least official notice of the harshness of the police. A mass meeting in the Hippodrome on December 5, arranged by Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, stirred the fervor of the women strikers anew. Despite defections and bitter privation, the strikers held their ranks fairly intact, but the leadership knew that, unless a settlement were reached quickly, a season's work would be lost and with it the chance of victory. Feelers for a settlement were, therefore, put out.

The first parley took place on December 10, with Morris Hillquit representing the union and I. B. Hyman, President of the manufacturers' association, representing the employers. It broke up without any result on the issue of the open shop. Two weeks later new conferences produced a written agreement in which a 52-hour week was stipulated; free needles, thread, power and appliances were conceded; equal division of work in slack times and four paid holidays were also granted. The union shop was not accepted, but specifications were agreed to by the employers preventing discrimination against union members and promising the rehiring of workers "at the earliest possible moment."

These were substantial gains in view of the poor strategic position the strikers now held, but when they were presented to the membership for ratification they were rejected.

During the course of the entire strike, separate settlements had been made with a number of small firms. But it was discovered that some of this "settled" work was finding its way to strike-bound firms. On January 11, 1910, the union offered to submit all differences to arbitration, but the manufacturers' association rejected the offer. The strike gradually broke up because of separate settlements with a number of large firms—all of them compromises that did not grant the union shop. Several important establishments rejected even a negative recognition of the union. One of these was the Triangle Waist Company in which 146 workers perished in the fire of March 25, 1911. It was charged that the doors had been locked because the employers feared the penetration of union organizers and committees.

The strike was officially declared ended on February 15, 1910. Viewed in the light of later developments, it was a historic event, for it marked the beginning of stable trade unionism and collective bargaining in the needle trades. It demonstrated the capacity of Jewish workers for organization, their

stamina during a prolonged struggle, and their readiness for self-sacrifice in the name of the common good.

Although the strike was a disappointment with regard to immediate recognition of the union, it brought 10,000 new members into Local 25 which, at the beginning of the campaign, had had no more than 100. It aroused the Jewish workers to a consciousness of their power and potentialities, and laid the foundations for the next step in the development of the union of Jewish workers, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

While the "Uprising of the 20,000" in the shirtwaist trade had been spontaneous, the "Great Revolt" of the cloakmakers that was to follow was premeditated and carefully planned. The industry had gone through substantial technological changes in the first decade of the new century. Legislation had outlawed most of the tenement "bed-room" shops, but the lofts to which the factories moved were small improvements in matters of light, air and sanitation. Hours were still long and, during the busy season, still limited only by human endurance. New machinery was introduced, but much of the burden and little of the benefit of the improved machinery accrued to the workers. In the cloak trade a heavy, factory-style sewing machine replaced the lighter household type; but it was still the practice for the worker to supply his own machine, an expensive and cumbersome fixture, especially when a worker was discharged and had to seek new employment. Earnings, despite the improved state of the industry, had gone down for the bulk of the workers, and only a few favorites in each shop prospered. These were the "inside" contractors who would undertake to sew or press a certain quantity of everything produced in one shop and then would hire a number of "helpers" to do the work. These inside contractors earned as much as \$30 or \$40 per week, while the majority of the workers still made no more than \$10 or \$12. In order to supplement their earnings, many cloakmakers took work home where their

families helped them turn out garments during evenings and Sundays.

The spectacular events in the shirtwaist trade encouraged the cloakmakers to renewed efforts at unionizing their own craft. In December 1909, the members of the New York Joint Board locals taxed themselves \$2 each in order to create a strike fund. Committees from each local were sent into the market to talk to the workers and to create the desire among them for a "general" strike. The *Forverts*, meanwhile, continued its daily barrage of union exhortations.

This agitation brought many new members into the union, and the younger workers who joined during this period themselves became volunteer agitators and recruiting agents for the organization. By the middle of 1910, over 10,000 workers were members and impatiently waiting for the "great event." In June of that year, the convention of the I.L.G.W.U. authorized its General Executive Board to make all necessary arrangements for a general strike in the cloak trade and to call it at whatever moment it would seem most opportune. A decision involving both moral and financial risk was to call a meeting in New York's Madison Square Garden. Never before had a labor organization held an indoor meeting on so large a scale. It took place on June 28, 1910, and its success exceeded every expectation. Thousands who could not get in were addressed at improvised meetings outside the Garden. The huge throng was unanimously in favor of a general strike. A secret poll, taken on the Saturday and Sunday of that week, resulted in a return of 18,771 for the strike and 615 opposed. On July 7, at 2 p.m., the strike was called. It brought an enormous turnout of workers. The trade was completely shut down.

The "Great Revolt" made history and gained several points for the cloakmakers. First, it was the most skillfully conducted strike in the experience of American labor. New techniques of supervision, of picketing and relief distribution were developed, which were to serve workers well in many

succeeding struggles. Furthermore, it gave new impetus to the influence of public-spirited citizens in the mediation of industrial conflicts. And, most important, it brought in its wake the innovation of the Protocol, the conduct of industrial relations by a machinery of self-regulation, new not only to the Jewish needle trades but also to all American industry.

As in the case of the waistmaker's strike, the employers in the cloak strike were adamant in their opposition to the closed union shop. The efforts of New York State mediators to bring the contending parties to a conference broke down when the employers formed an association and demanded a written stipulation in advance of the conference that the union would not insist on the union shop. More successful in mediation was A. Lincoln Filene, a public-spirited merchant from Boston, at whose suggestion Louis D. Brandeis, already a famous attorney, instituted several moves toward a compromise.

But the very idea of a conference with the employers at this stage was opposed by the more radical and militant elements in the union. Thus, when Brandeis, late in July, finally induced both sides to come to the first of several conferences, the union's negotiating committee, in order to appease its militants, included a Socialist who was not directly connected with the trade but who was most intimately bound up with the striking immigrant group. He was Benjamin Schlesinger, at that time manager of the *Forverts*. Another member of the negotiating committee of ten was the chairman of the picketing committee, Morris Sigman. Both men were later to become Presidents of the I.L.G.W.U. and leading figures in the Jewish labor movement in general.

These parleys, like the previous abortive attempts, were about to break up on the issue of the union shop when Brandeis skillfully introduced the idea of the "preferential union shop," by which employers undertook to engage union members in preference to non-union workers. The manner of enforcing this was left to the lawyers

of the two parties to work out—Julius Henry Cohen for the employers and Meyer London for the union. They arrived at a compromise, but it was rejected by the union's delegation, and the strike entered a stage of bitter and protracted struggle with all its usual features of police brutality and even an injunction against picketing. This was answered with yet more intensified picketing.

As the strike continued, the privation of the workers and their families increased. The *Forverts* and the New York Socialist *Call* opened up their columns to appeals for money, and the *Forverts* alone raised more than \$62,000 for the strikers. At special relief conferences, called by the Workmen's Circle and the United Hebrew Trades, additional funds were collected. Merchants in workers' districts extended credit in a number of cases, and restaurant keepers gave free meals to many strikers. Most curious of all, a few bankers advanced several thousand dollars to the union for strike expenses. Finally, a substantial revenue came from shops where, the issues having been settled, returned workers taxed themselves 15 percent of their earnings to support the strike.

Nevertheless, the resources of the union were insufficient to cope with the mounting needs of the tens of thousands of families left destitute by the enforced idleness of their breadwinners. The city's business and industrial life was also disrupted by the strike. It was at this point that Jacob H. Schiff, financier, philanthropist and a leader in the Jewish community took a hand in the situation. At his suggestion, Louis Marshall, lawyer and Jewish communal leader, arranged a conference between Meyer London and Julius Henry Cohen, attorneys for the two sides, at which new concessions were granted by the employers, including a 52-hour week, the preferential shop and the submission of the wage dispute to arbitration. When the proposal was submitted to the strikers on August 27 it was overwhelmingly rejected, the workers in settled shops urging the strikers to continue the struggle

and promising them as much as 50 percent of their earnings for the purpose.

The constructive leaders of the union realized, however, that the strike could not long continue with the shops half settled and half struck, and Meyer London was, therefore, instructed to continue negotiations with Louis Marshall and Julius Henry Cohen. On September 2, a new agreement was formulated; it was hurriedly submitted to a meeting of shop chairmen who, after long debate, authorized the strike committee to accept it. The new agreement had a curious label. It was called "The Protocol of Peace." The word protocol was purposely chosen because it was little understood by either side. It mollified those employers who objected to a formal agreement that would give recognition to the union, and took the edge off the word "peace" for the radicals who held that there could never be peace between the working class and the exploiting capitalist class. Nevertheless, whatever may have been the reservations of the dogmatic on either side, the "Protocol" was a formal contract, the first fully formulated collective agreement in the industry.

With all its compromises, the new agreement was a great victory for the strikers and was received by them with unrestrained joy. When word of the settlement reached New York's East Side, the entire community rejoiced. Thousands upon thousands of cloakmakers and other workers thronged to the square before the *Forverts* and danced and embraced each other to celebrate the victory. Even on the next day the celebration continued with music bands and trucks decorated with flags and banners carrying the victorious cloakmakers through the workers' districts.

The Protocol granted the workers the following important concessions: A 50-hour week, double payment for overtime, increases in the minimum scales for week-workers, price committees to fix rates in the shops for piece-workers, a variant of the preferential shop which strengthened the position of the union by giving employers a choice only between one union man and

another, and the abolition of all nuisance charges for machines, needles, thread and power. It also established a joint board of sanitary control to improve the conditions of work and—this was new and most important—it provided for the settlement of disputes by a grievance committee and a board of arbitration.

The strikes in the industries producing women's apparel were duplicated in various forms also in the men's clothing trade, in the cap (and later in the millinery) trade, in the fur trade and other crafts in which Jewish workers predominated.

The majority of these workers were socialistically-minded. Socialism was not merely a political or economic theory to them, but also a faith, a *Weltanschauung*. The ideal of the co-operative commonwealth and the brotherhood of man captured the imagination of the Jewish multitude in America. It was destined to be both a great binding force in Jewish labor and a source of disruptive conflict.

The rising influence of the Socialist and radical elements in contrast to the proponents of trade unionism "pure and simple" was reflected in the election of the chief officers of the I.L.G.W.U. at its convention in 1914. Benjamin Schlesinger was elected President and Morris Sigman, Secretary-Treasurer. Meanwhile, the New York manufacturers urged the International to bring the competing markets of other cities under union control. Strikes called for that purpose in Cleveland, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis and elsewhere ended badly or with indifferent results for the union. In many instances spies and agents provocateurs were hired by employers to instigate violence and thus help to break the strikes.

The Schlesinger administration in the I.L.G.W.U. was notable for the skill with which public opinion in favor of the union was aroused, among both the workers and the general community. Carefully prepared strikes in Philadelphia and other cities established the union on a firm basis outside New York. In the chief center a lock-out-strike in 1916, involving 60,000 cloak-

makers, ended victoriously for the union. The Protocol of Peace was abolished as a result of this lockout and was replaced by the standard agreement now prevailing in the industry. In the dress trade, a brief stoppage was sufficient to put into operation a collective agreement negotiated in advance of the strike. In the auxiliary trades like bonnaz embroidery, white goods and corset making, strikes of serious proportions put the unions on a permanent basis. The I.L.G.W.U. thus grew and prospered in spite of internal frictions until the division between "rights" and "lefts" and the conflict with the Communists sapped it of its strength and brought it to the brink of destruction.

## VII. FACTIONAL STRIFE

In view of the origin and ideological concepts of most of the Jewish workers in the needle trades, it was inevitable that they should be deeply stirred by the events that brought about the collapse of Tsarist despotism in Russia. When, after a confused struggle which was little understood in the United States, there came into power a regime that proclaimed itself to be Socialist in character, the sympathies of many in the needle trades naturally swung to its side. Almost three years passed before the character of the Bolshevik Revolution assumed definite shape and doubts began to arise regarding the beneficence of its rule or its allegiance to true Socialist and libertarian principles. The factions that formed around this issue brought their struggle into the unions, striving for control and power. In the fall of 1919, a shibboleth of division between "lefts" and "rights" was the so-called shop steward system which was supposed to extend or implement the power of the "rank and file" against "officialdom". In 1920 the Trade Union Educational League, headed by William Z. Foster, appeared on the scene to "reform" the unions in the needle trades along the lines of "industrial unionism". In 1921 the Trade Union Educational League became a definite arm of the Communist Party of the United States.

At that time, the party still enjoyed an existence independent of any arbitrary direction from abroad. When the strictures of party direction and the "party line" became too binding, there was a split within Communist circles and the "shop steward" adherents formed a faction separate from the followers of the Trade Union Educational League. The issue of joining or not joining the *Profintern*, the Communist trade union internationale, kept the needle trade unions in a welter of bitter debate for a long time. Charges of "class collaboration" hurled against the leadership of the unions started a chain of vilification and personal abuse against all those holding office in the unions.

In the I.L.G.W.U. these disputes and divisions took forms which kept the union in a state of continuous eruption and undermined its power and prestige in industry. In general, the industrial situation was not a favorable one for the union. It had come out of the boom period of the First World War with a number of important gains, the most significant being security of job tenure (an employer being forbidden to fire a worker after a brief trial period) and the introduction of the week-work system; and the employers balked against both restrictions. When attempts to abolish union regulations by a frontal attack failed, many employers sought to evade union control by resorting to erection of out-of-town shops. Then the depression of 1920-1921 further aggravated both the industrial and organizational position of unions.

The Communist-led faction took advantage of this situation to extend its influence and grasp control of the administration of a number of the most important locals. All the blame for the deterioration of industrial relations was laid at the doors of the conservative leadership, and Schlesinger, as head of the International, became the target of violent personal abuse. He finally resigned his office and was succeeded by Morris Sigman in the spring of 1923. Many felt that Sigman's integrity and earthy bluntness would make him proof against

the attacks that were being engineered by the Communists in the name of the rank and file. Three months more of conflict in the union ended with a compromise settlement which registered, in effect, a substantial victory for the Communist faction. It left them in control of the major locals in New York and at the special convention which followed they nearly gained control of the International office as well. Only a switch in party line and orders from party headquarters prevented the Communists from going through with a split in the International which they were already in the process of achieving.

This split took place three years later when the *Profintern*, in another switch in the Communist Party line, ordered its adherents to cease boring from within, and to form opposition unions of their own. In December 1928, the Communists launched the Needle Trades Industrial Union. It was not an effective instrument, however, for it was formed after the disastrous cloak strike in 1926 in which the Communist-led faction had spent \$3,500,000, thus bringing the union to the brink of total collapse, and had discredited itself with the membership by disregarding those very moral practices and procedures which they had so vehemently demanded when they were in the opposition. Furthermore, among the Communists themselves there was a sharp cleavage because of the policies imposed by the party on the trade union elements within its ranks. The faction headed by Jay Lovestone sent a delegation to Moscow to appeal against the party functionaries and the decision to form dual unions, but the appeal was rejected. Leaders of the Communist opposition split with them on this and other issues of the party line and later, men like Charles Zimmerman and Louis Hyman rejoined the International and became valuable administrators in it.

Sigman resigned his presidency of the I.L.G.W.U. in October 1928, and Schlesinger was recalled to office. With characteristic resourcefulness he proceeded to rebuild the union which was on the verge of col-

lapse as a result of the lost strike and the strife with the Communists. His health soon failed, however, and David Dubinsky, then manager of the Cutters' Local 10, was called in as assistant to the president. The 1929 convention of the I.L.G.W.U. elected Dubinsky to the office of Secretary-Treasurer and *de facto* President during Schlesinger's recurrent illnesses.

Dubinsky rose to this office after showing his ability both as administrator and negotiator in his own local and in the conduct of the strife with the Communist faction. He was elected President of the I.L.G.W.U. upon Schlesinger's death in 1933, and his administration saw the union expand to unequalled size, power and prestige. Today it has a membership of nearly 400,000 workers, the majority non-Jews, in every branch and craft of the women's fabric apparel industry.

#### VIII. THE AMALGAMATED CLOTHING WORKERS OF AMERICA

The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, despite points of dissimilarity to other unions in the needle trade, is of the same flesh and blood as the other organizations which comprise the Jewish labor movement of America. Its field is the men's clothing industry in the United States and Canada, as well as related—though sometimes distantly related—trades and crafts. Its founding as an organization in its present form, has a definite date—December 26, 1914—but its origins go considerably beyond that time, to the sweatshops, the toilsome, long hours, the meager pay and all the other industrial evils that afflicted the Jewish immigrant workers. In addition to the sweatshop and its drawbacks, Jewish workers in the men's clothing field suffered from the so-called task work system.

Unlike women's apparel, which was constantly subject to changes in style, men's clothing could be standardized, divided into sectional operations and adapted to the demands of assembly-line production. The management calculated in advance how long it should take to perform a number of

tailoring operations. It therefore set minimum quotas to be completed for a day's pay, and only when these goals were reached was the pay credited to the worker's account. This system easily lent itself to abuse and in an economy with an overabundance of labor that was as yet badly organized, timid and subject to the unquestioned authority of owner and foreman, the abuses were quick to develop. The daily quota of coats or jackets to be completed was always increasing, and soon a week's work of seventy or eighty gruelling hours produced only four or five days' pay. Competition between contractors made them increasingly severe taskmasters, and their demands on the workers became more and more intolerable. Long before the formal organization of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, therefore, there were already spontaneous uprisings in men's clothing factories. They resulted in the establishment of sporadic unions and an improvement in the wage rates or the quotas set. Like the unions in the other needle trades, however, these organizations of the men's clothing workers had a "seasonal" character and disintegrated as soon as the immediate cause of the outbreak was removed.

The tendency of Jewish immigrant workers to rebel against the wrongs committed against them and to forget their unions as soon as their grievances were settled evoked a sense of frustration and no little disdain among the chief officers of the United Garment Workers, the A.F. of L. organization which was already fairly well established. The President, Thomas A. Rickert, and the Secretary, B. A. Larger, men of integrity, but lacking in understanding of the mentality of the immigrants, were impatient with the mercurial temperament of the Jewish tailors, their tendency to tempestuous eruptions on points of ideology without direct bearing on trade union affairs.

This was the heyday of the union label and in certain fields and enterprises it was a powerful factor favoring the unions. The United Garment Workers used it as a lever



against the encroachments of prison-made goods, and also to wrest improved wages and working conditions from employers who needed the label for the overalls and other working clothes they produced. Not only the conservative leaders of the United Garment Workers but even the radical leaders of the I.L.G.W.U. for a time placed great confidence in the importance of the union label as an instrument to build the union. It took three years to prove to the cloakmakers that the label was by no means a "cure-all", and that only by organizing the workers in the shops could they build their union. The United Garment Workers, whose main strength was at that time centered in the overall shops, had had surprising and substantial successes because of the union label. The leadership of the union had therefore no reason to doubt its equal value in the unionization of the men's streetwear industry, which was expanding by prodigious strides in New York, Chicago and other cities.

However, the Jewish workers in the men's clothing industry, as well as the Italian and other immigrant workers, were gradually reaching the same consciousness of their rights and powers as their fellow workers in the cloak, waist, dress and cap-making trades.

The accident of industrial concentration forced the spark of permanent unionism in men's clothing shops to catch first in Chicago, and in New York a short while later. A strike that was to involve more than 40,000 workers in Chicago began on the issue of a quarter-of-a-cent. A foreman in one of the shops of Hart Schaffner and Marx reduced the rate for sewing certain seams from four to three-and-three-quarters cents. Such arbitrary reductions had been made before without protest from the workers. This time—September 22, 1910—the shop remonstrated with the management to revoke the cut. When the workers were refused, a strike spread rapidly with the District Council of the United Garment Workers in charge of it. But it was more than a month before the officers of the union ac-

ceded to the demand of the workers for a "general" strike. It was called on October 26, 1910, against all non-union shops in Chicago. The response was overwhelming and the entire industry became paralyzed. But Rickert, President of the national union, still remained skeptical regarding the immigrants' ability to maintain their strike-born unity for any length of time, and on November 5 he concluded an agreement with Hart Schaffner and Marx which provided for the rehiring of all strikers, and the submission of all grievances to a board of arbitration. Recognition of the union, however, was specifically denied in the agreement. When the settlement was submitted to the strikers at a number of meetings, it was overwhelmingly rejected. The strikers also decided to take further negotiations out of the hands of their national officers and to create a Joint Strike Conference Board. Outstanding in this newly-constituted strike committee was John Fitzpatrick, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor, who helped to organize a system of commissaries to supply food to the strikers and their families. The local A.F. of L. also brought political pressure to bear on the city's administration to check the hostility of the police against the strikers and to induce intervention for a settlement. Police brutality was but little reduced; a meeting in the office of the Mayor, however, brought forth a new settlement proposal from Hart Schaffner and Marx. But the Wholesale Clothiers' Association did not join in this settlement and when it was offered for ratification to the strikers, it was overwhelmingly rejected.

The strike now entered its most bitter and desperate stage. Strikers on the picket line were assaulted by hired thugs and harassed by the police, who made hundreds of arrests. The longer the strike continued the worse became the economic plight of the strikers. The Illinois State Senate intervened, but efforts of a Senate committee to bring about a settlement were rebuffed by the employers' association. A break came in January 1911, when the firm of Sturm and

Mayer first settled with the union, and then Hart Schaffner and Marx followed. The agreement with the latter was submitted not to the entire body of strikers but only to the employees of that firm, and they accepted it as the best to be obtained under the circumstances. It was not an unfavorable settlement for, in addition to its provision for arbitration of grievances and the rehiring of all strikers, it also guaranteed that there would be no discrimination against members of the United Garment Workers. Furthermore, inasmuch as the shop of Hart Schaffner and Marx was the biggest of its kind, it gave the union a firm position in the industry which was not easily to be shaken.

The strike against the other Chicago clothing manufacturers continued until February 3 when Rickert, judging the struggle to be hopeless, declared the strike ended without consulting any of the strike's leaders, and ordered the tailors back to work without a settlement and without any guarantees whatsoever. This arbitrary action put an end to what was fast becoming a desperate situation but it created a feeling of distrust and hostility toward the national officers of the United Garment Workers that was to cost them their last vestige of influence over the immigrant workers in the huge clothing industry.

The real leader of the Chicago strike was a young man called Sidney Hillman who worked in the Hart Schaffner and Marx plant. He showed great ability as organizer, administrator and negotiator. When the cloakmakers of New York needed an able man to administer their union under the Protocol, they transferred him from Chicago. Before he could begin his new job, however, he was called back to Chicago by the men's clothing workers to head the dissidents in the United Garment Workers.

While the Chicago strike was approaching its inconclusive end, the men's clothing workers of New York were also in a fever of organizational activity. The leadership of the United Garment Workers understood the spirit that moved the New York workers

as little as had the leaders in Chicago, and friction mounted between the national office and the New York locals of Jewish tailors. In 1911 the latter held a conference in Philadelphia to formulate demands against their national officers, the chief of these being that control over the organizers in the men's clothing field be vested in the locals. The national officers were bitterly resentful of this demand and considered it an impudent usurpation of authority. They were furthermore embarrassed by several shop strikes called by the locals in union label shops, and the flouting of contracts signed by the United Garment Workers.

Thus, since the attitude of the official heads of the union toward the locals was negative if not even hostile, the driving force for the general strike that was in process of preparation had to come from other sources. The socialists now moved to the fore, mobilizing the tailors for the forthcoming strike. The offices of the *Forverts* were converted into strike headquarters and the editor and staff members became (to all intents and purposes) union functionaries for "the duration". The United Hebrew Trades and recruits from other unions supplied the technical skills essential for the drive to organize the workers and, finally, in December 1912, the question of a general strike was submitted to a referendum of the membership. It resulted in a vote of more than 35,000 for, and less than 3,000 against such a strike. The returns were flashed on a screen in front of the *Forverts* building before a throng numbering 40,000 and were received with loud enthusiasm.

The general strike was called for December 30, 1912, on the following demands as presented to the employers: the abolition of sub-contracting, of the use of foot power and of home work; a 48-hour week with time-and-a-half for overtime and double time for Sundays and holidays; a wage increase of 20 percent.

The response to the strike call exceeded the most optimistic expectations. Within a week 110,000 clothing workers had left their shops and had instituted vigorous picket-

ing. Clashes with strikebreakers, hired guards and police occurred daily, and the employers obtained an injunction to restrain picketing, an injunction that was demonstratively ignored when 20,000 strikers marched through the garment district and clashed with the police.

A number of leaders rose to the forefront in this strike; they were to become key-men in the building of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, and among them there were Joseph Schlossberg, Louis Hollander, Abraham Miller, Joseph Gold and S. Blumenreich. The strike was effective, yet was in danger of crumbling as it dragged on through January and into February without an appreciable weakening among the employers. The break came on February 28 when Thomas Rickert, again without consulting the local leaders, accepted a compromise offer from the employers to settle the strike. The chief feature of the offer was the establishment of a commission to determine the question of hours. So far as wages were concerned, there was to be an increase of \$1 a week in addition to the differential which the shortening of hours might bring. The employers also undertook not to reduce wage rates during the slack seasons nor to discriminate against union members in rehiring workers.

Whatever the practical merits of the settlement offer, it had the shortcoming that it was secretly arrived at by officers who were hostile to the strike and contemptuous of both the local leadership and membership. It was immediately denounced by the strike leaders as treacherous, and so violent was the reaction against it that, when the tailors gathered before the *Forverts* building for a hearing of the plan, they booed its proponents and hurled stones against the doors and windows of their favorite newspaper. The editor of the *Forverts* then addressed the enraged strikers, agreed with them that they were right in their opposition and urged them to continue the strike.

Three days later representatives of the "movement", including spokesmen of more than 300,000 organized Jewish workers, met

to formulate plans and supply the means to continue the strike. The city administration under Mayor Gaynor, influenced no doubt by Rickert and his A.F. of L. supporters, ordered the suppression of all picketing. However, the parleys that brought about the compromise were now continued with the local strike leaders, and on March 12 they produced the settlement that ended the strike. The new compromise differed only slightly from the one Rickert had effected.

The settlement of the strike did not improve but aggravated relations between the Jewish tailors and the United Garment Workers. A convention was being planned and both sides began to jockey for position. Nashville, Tennessee, had been designated as the convention city and the New York tailors made efforts to change the meeting place to a more accessible clothing center. Local 2 of New York obtained a sufficient number of seconds for its motion to transfer the convention to Rochester, N. Y., but the Secretary of the United Garment Workers declared the endorsements invalid on the ground that the seconding locals were in arrears with their dues. Thereupon the General Office also notified a number of locals that unless they paid their bills immediately their delegates would not be seated at the convention.

When the convention was called to order on October 12, 1914, the Credentials Committee, appointed by Rickert, recommended the seating of 198 delegates, most of them from small work-garment locals. One hundred and five delegates, representing an unquestioned majority of the membership, were refused seats and told to report to the Credentials Committee for validation of their certificates. Police and plainclothesmen were present to maintain order and to divert the non-seated delegates into the visitors' gallery.

The following morning the non-seated delegates were still barred from the floor, and Frank Rosenblum of Chicago, one of the few tailors' delegates to be seated, stated on a point of order that the report of the

Credentials Committee should be made first business. Rickert ruled against the point of order and disclosed his strategy when he declared that it might be several days before the Credentials Committee would be ready with its final report. Rosenblum then moved that the names of the unseated delegates be added to the roll, and when Rickert refused to entertain the motion, the Chicago delegate himself called for a vote and, with the unseated delegates participating, declared the motion carried. A fellow-delegate from Chicago, Sam Rissman, immediately followed with another motion to remove the Chairman because of his allegedly illegitimate conduct of the session. A third Chicago delegate, S. Pass, then moved that, since a delegation representing a minority of the membership had captured the hall, the session be adjourned, to reconvene at the Duncan Hotel, headquarters of the oppositional clothing delegates. One hundred and thirteen delegates then left the hall, met in the Duncan Hotel and declared themselves to be the legally constituted convention of the United Garment Workers. A new set of officers was elected. Sidney Hillman, then only 28 years of age, was elected President and Joseph Schlossberg, Secretary-Treasurer.

Such tactics could not, of course, intimidate the officials of the United Garment Workers. The American Federation of Labor considered the dissident tailors a secession group and refused to seat their delegates at its own convention a few weeks later.

The clothing workers proceeded to establish officially what already existed *de facto*, a union independent from the union of overall and work-garment-makers. On December 26, 1914, the insurgents met in special convention in New York and launched the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, the word "Amalgamated" serving to include the Tailors' Industrial Union, which had decided to merge with the new organization. Sidney Hillman was elected President and Joseph Schlossberg, Secretary, and a constitution with a pre-

amble avowing Socialist aspirations was adopted.

But the United Garment Workers did not give up its jurisdiction over the men's clothing industry to the new organization without a fight. It prevailed on the American Federation of Labor to try to isolate the Amalgamated from the rest of the labor movement. Thereupon the A.F. of L. instructed the United Hebrew Trades (*Geverkshafte*) to expel the Amalgamated local from its midst. When the *Geverkshafte* refused to do so, the A.F. of L. ordered all its own affiliated international unions to withdraw from them. In order to spare the Jewish union any further embarrassment, the Amalgamated then voluntarily withdrew from the Hebrew Trades.

On the industrial front, the Garment Workers officials found a number of employers who were tempted to deal with them instead of with the more exacting Amalgamated spokesmen. In January 1915, a group of New York's East Side manufacturers locked their workers out and refused to employ them unless they became members of the United Garment Workers. The maneuver failed and within a month these employers had to plead for peace and grant the Amalgamated complete recognition. In addition to the prestige gained by this victory, the Amalgamated also won the affiliation of the cutters who, until then, had still remained members of the United Garment Workers.

Conflicts of this kind between the Amalgamated and the United Garment Workers continued for several years in a number of clothing centers, and while the new organization suffered frequent reversals, the net result of the struggle for power was a consolidation of the Amalgamated's hold on the clothing industry and of a relegation of the United Garment Workers to the subsidiary branch of overallmaking. During the first year of its existence the Amalgamated did suffer one defection—that of the Tailor's Industrial Union which had amalgamated with the insurgents at the special convention in New York and had then left to re-

turn to the A.F. of L. fold in 1915. Originally, the Tailors' Industrial Union had itself been a dissident group, known as the Journeymen Tailors' Union. And many years later it once again returned to the side of the Amalgamated. (For final outcome of the conflict between the Amalgamated and the United Garment Workers see end of this chapter).

The years of World War I brought a wave of prosperity to all the apparel trades and gave the Amalgamated the opportunity it needed to expand and strengthen its hold on the industry. When the war was over it was able to meet both the onslaught of Communist factions and of employer opposition with a thoroughly integrated and well-established union machinery. So far as the Communists were concerned, Sidney Hillman avoided a head-on conflict with them as long as their efforts did not menace his control of the organization. In 1922 he returned from a visit to Soviet Russia and, at his behest, the Amalgamated convention of that year moved to form a million-dollar corporation to send machinery and other aid to the Russian clothing industry. At a subsequent convention a Slovenian local in Chicago made a token donation of money to the *Freiheit*, the official Communist Yiddish daily published in New York, and critics charged the sudden affection of the Slovenians for the Jewish Communists to Hillman's subtle influence. During the same year, however, Amalgamated delegates refused to insist that Communist delegates be seated at the convention of the Conference for Progressive Political Action which nominated Senator Robert M. La Follette for the Presidency of the country. The Communists charged Hillman with playing both ends against the middle and started open hostilities against him.

The tactics pursued by the Communists in the Amalgamated were in no way different from those that they had found effective in the I.L.G.W.U. and Fur Workers Union. They heaped personal abuse on Hillman and the other officers of the union,

called unauthorized stoppages in several New York shops which they controlled, agitated against the payment of dues which had just been increased, as well as against the payment of an assessment which was levied on members to conduct the strike of 1925 against the International Tailoring Company and its close affiliate, the J. L. Taylor Company. Hillman bided his time, and when the strike was won moved in against the Communists. At his suggestion the General Executive Board suspended the Executive Board of Coat Operators Local 5 in New York, stronghold of the Communist opposition, and ousted the Communist ring-leaders both from the union and their jobs. The Communists retaliated by forming an Amalgamated Joint Action Committee which staged several riotous demonstrations in front of the union's general office and even invaded its headquarters. The violence proved pointless, however, for control of the shops slipped from the Communists' hands when the joint boards in the men's and children's clothing industries of New York were merged and a representative of the cutters, Abraham Beckerman, became manager of the combined board. Protest meetings called by the Communists failed because the administration succeeded in filling the halls with its followers who turned the meetings into loyalty demonstrations for the union.

The attempts of the Communists to stir up conflict were even less successful outside New York than those in the city. Indeed, the fact that the New York market was no longer dominant in the clothing industry became one of the factors most advantageous to the administration in its conflict with the Communists. For the disruption in New York City could no longer tie up the men's clothing industry as a whole as it did the shops producing women's cloaks or fur garments. The internal struggle could therefore be resolved on straight organizational lines without reference to the industrial pressure which distracted the administration in other unions. Moreover, Hillman

held the administration lines intact and did not permit internal frictions to disperse his forces as long as the struggle with the Communists continued. Whatever reforms he felt were needed in the New York organization he instituted after the conflict with the Communists was won, and not before or during the fight. So far as the membership was concerned, he convinced them that the struggle against the Communists was not ideological but concerned strictly with matters of organizational responsibility and discipline. The clothing workers of New York felt that in order to maintain their union and safeguard what was left of the market in their city they could not afford the luxury of Communist factionalism, and so they supported their union administration.

By the time of the convention of the Amalgamated in May 1926, the Communists admitted defeat by proposing that an amnesty be accorded to those who had been suspended or expelled in the conflict. It was not granted, however, and thereafter no one questioned the administration's complete control of the organization.

This authority was tested five years later when the administration moved in against racketeering elements that had infiltrated into the industry in New York and had infested the cutters' local. It occurred during the era of Louis (Lepke) Buchhalter and other underworld characters who, with the support of corrupt city officials, extorted huge sums from employers by means of terrorism and promises of "protection" from the union. Indications showed that officers of the key cutters' local had been too complacent about the inroads made by these gangster elements. With a promise of support from the police department, the union in 1931 called a general strike in the New York area, settled with the legitimate association immediately and held out against the gangster-protected shops until the employers were convinced that such protection was of no avail to them. At the same time the General Office brought charges of financial irregularities against the chief officers

of the cutters' local. When the latter insisted that these charges be aired before the cutters' Executive Board instead of the General Executive Board, the Amalgamated suspended them from office and reorganized the local. Soon thereafter the administration's hold over the New York industry became complete, and it has since then never been challenged.

Hillman's sudden death in 1946 brought about a change of officers but no appreciable change in policies or in the relations between contending forces in the union and the industry. The President of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers is today Jacob S. Potofsky. Frank Rosenblum has taken Potofsky's place as general Secretary-Treasurer.

As a footnote to the history of the Amalgamated it should be added that in 1933 it settled its jurisdictional differences with the United Garment Workers and was thereupon admitted to the American Federation of Labor. Its stay in the A.F. of L. was of short duration, however, for in 1936 it was suspended and subsequently expelled together with other unions which had formed the C.I.O. Although other founders of the C.I.O. later returned to the A.F. of L. fold, the Amalgamated has not done so. At present it is a pillar of right-wing strength in the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

## IX. THE UNITED HATTERS, CAP AND MILLINERY WORKERS

The capmakers and millinery workers, always an active branch of the Jewish labor movement, in the main followed and even anticipated the pattern of the other needle trade unions. The limited size of the industry in which the capmakers operated was both an advantage and a disadvantage. On the one hand, the relatively small number involved created an atmosphere of intimacy among the membership and their leaders. On the other, when the union set out to organize scattered shops in various cities and towns, the financial and physical burden weighed heavily on its members.

Long before the waistmakers, cloakmakers and men's clothing tailors established their organizations, the capmakers already had a strong, thoroughly experienced union. A convention held in New York on December 27, 1901, established the United Cloth Hat and Capmakers of North America. Six months later, on June 17, 1902, the American Federation of Labor issued a charter to this international union. Strikes and energetic organizing campaigns which followed brought the membership up to a total of 3,000 and an income of more than \$12,000 for the year of 1904.

The exceedingly strong spirit of cohesion and devotion to the union that existed among the capmakers had been forged during a number of difficult strikes and lock-outs. The union represented both a cause and a faith to its members and also served them as a gathering place for social activities. The chief officer of the Cloth Hat and Capmakers international union was, until 1911, the Secretary-Treasurer. There was no president, for the radical capmakers considered that office too authoritarian. In 1911 Max Zuckerman, the General Secretary, brought a new recruit into the union office. He was Max Zaritsky, a young man whose ability had impressed Zuckerman when he met him in the Boston local of the capmakers. Zaritsky was given the post of Assistant Secretary and immediately plunged into the work of expanding the union in New York and the scattered centers around it.

A new industry began to develop in those years, the millinery industry. Hats for women had, of course, been made over the centuries, but until then their manufacture in the United States had been a home craft in the hands of seamstresses or private milliners who made headwear to order. Early in the twenties hat-making moved into factories. Enterprising Jewish businessmen discovered that it was possible to produce attractive hats for women in wholesale quantities. This was particularly true of straw hats, the braids of which were sewn by machines similar to those used in the

cap trade. Wire and buckram frames also lent themselves to finishing and trimming by factory methods, and the production of millinery naturally drifted into cap shops. Capmakers frequently shifted from one craft to the other and worked at either as the seasonal demands required. Zaritsky sensed the possibilities of this new development in the trade and concentrated his efforts on the millinery workers.

The union grew and prospered. An organization drive in the millinery trade brought increasing numbers into the union. A special local was assigned to the milliners, Local 24. Later another local (Local 42) was formed for the millinery blockers. Heading the drive in the millinery branch of the trade was Nathaniel Spector who preached the message of unionism to the milliners wherever they happened to congregate. By 1915 the union had grown large and influential enough to assert itself and gain a collective agreement from an association of employers organized as the Ladies Hat Manufacturers' Protective Association. The size of the union now seemed to require a president. Over the objections of his associates, Zuckerman had the constitution amended in 1917 to create the office of President and at the convention two years later he insisted that Zaritsky take the top office.

The boom of World War I brought prosperity to the capmakers as it had done to all the other apparel trades, and the union used this opportunity to the full to consolidate new gains for its membership. One of these was the introduction of the week-work system to replace piecework. The victory was costly for, although the week-work system was finally discarded, it was only after it had driven a number of important firms out of the cap trade and hastened the decline that was already in motion as a result of a change in fashion and in the wearing habits of men.

A general strike in the millinery trade in 1919 proved disastrous to the union, and it was six years before the organization regained the strength it had possessed in

that year. After that the union used caution and proceeded by easy stages and individual shops to obtain substantial control in the New York market. Its control was endangered, however, by a number of hostile forces. First, the union had to carry on a jurisdictional struggle with the United Hatters. Then the administration of the Blockers' Local turned isolationist and refused to cooperate with the rest of the union on matters of policy and strategy. In addition, the Communists gained control of the women's Local 43, and adopted a policy of harassing and disruptive tactics against the other locals. Worst of all, gangsters entered the scene and tried to drive the union out of their "protected" shops. At one time all four elements worked in coordination against the legitimate organization, and it required all the resources of the union and much physical courage on the part of the milliner's leaders (amongst them Zaritsky, A. Mendelowitz, Alex Rose and Lucy Oppenheim) to stand up to their opponents. The fight finally ended in the union's victory in 1931.

The jurisdictional dispute with the United Hatters was in some respects similar to the one in which the Amalgamated Clothing Workers became involved with the United Garment Workers. The Hatters claimed that the Cloth Hat and Capmakers had infringed on their jurisdiction by accepting milliners into their membership. The Hatters was a cherished organization in the American Federation of Labor. Its desperate struggle, culminating in the celebrated Danbury Hatters Case, had won it the sympathy of the entire labor movement. In its composition of officers and membership it was much like the Garment Workers. Samuel Gompers, who understood the industrial and social difficulties in the way, tried to effect a compromise between the two organizations. He succeeded in establishing a truce for a time, but in 1931 the dispute flared up again, and the Hatters attempted to sign up millinery shops in opposition to the cap and millinery union.

During the entire period, Zaritsky had

been offering a solution to this jurisdictional dispute. He proposed the amalgamation of both organizations with one set of international officers but with autonomous departments for the two crafts. This proposal was finally adopted in 1934. The amalgamation turned into a happy union for both sides. Soon even the separate departments were abolished, and now men's hatters, capmakers and millinery workers live and work peacefully side by side. The combined union has made great strides in all three branches of its jurisdiction. The Hatter's representatives in the combined union are Michael F. Greene, the General Secretary and Martin Lawlor, the Label Secretary, both of them originally hailing from Ireland. Members of Irish, Russian, Italian, German and English descents, and Jews, Catholics and Protestants work side by side in all the crafts and participate in the activities of the union.

The Communist bid for dominance in the union was beaten off by resort to the common sense, loyalty and combined will of the members themselves. The Communist faction was thrown off balance by the amalgamation of the women's Local 43, where the Communists had entrenched themselves with the men's Local 24. In the combined local their influence ceased to be dominating, when the non-Communists formed an organization committee of more than 700 volunteers which came to meetings regularly and thus shook off the Communists' parliamentary obstructionism which was the Communists' chief weapon in sorties against the needle trade unions.

The gangsters were routed by a mass attack on their citadels, the "protected" shops. With the aid of Governor Lehman, Judge Samuel Seabury and decent elements in the New York police department, the union called all its workers out on strike, settled with the dominant association of employers and placed its force of 700 volunteers on a picket line around the gangster-held shops. The lines of besieging pickets were held intact day after day until all the former "protected" shops capitulated



and their owners signed the union agreement. The United Hatters had won its war against the underworld.

For a while, open and covert assistance had been given to the Communists and the racketeers by the isolationist administration of the Blockers' Local 42. To overcome this, the General Executive Board of the union reorganized the local, ousted the officers who were obstructing the smooth functioning of the millinery union and, soon thereafter (in April 1932), had a well-organized, well-articulated organization in the field. The authority of the millinery union in New York has never been questioned since then.

The cap trade has in recent years been on the road of industrial decline, but the idealism and devotion to the United Hatters which have become ingrained in the predominantly Jewish working force have not diminished.

#### X. OTHER TRADES

Apart from the needle trades, including the fur trade, Jewish workers in the USA concentrated in appreciable numbers in the leather and shoe industry, metal trade, the building and decorating trades and the industry of food processing—bakeries, butcheries and the like. There were and still are scores of Jewish unions in the above mentioned trades not to speak of trades connected with the Jewish language or traditions—such as Hebrew typographical workers, waiters, chorus personnel for synagogues and Jewish theaters, actors, writers, etc.

All these unions followed, in general, the pattern established by the big needle trades unions. All of them had to go through hard initial struggles with the entrepreneurs, and enjoyed a period of rapid advance under the New Deal. All of them were and still are guided by a progressive idealistically minded leadership, all of them pioneered in their respective trades in modern technique of trade unionism, all had to experience more or less violent ideological and fac-

tional strifes, which, with a few exceptions, ended in a victory of the democratic wing.

The most notable of these exceptions is the fur workers union in New York. In 1925 the Communists succeeded in capturing control of the union machinery. In the New York fur strike of 1926, one of the most violent in the history of the needle trades, right-wing and centrist members were brutally assaulted by terrorist squads, and all opposition to the Communist direction of the strike was suppressed. Since then the Communists have been able to maintain their power in the union.

In the building trades the newly-arrived Jewish immigrants found unions already established. For a time these unions excluded Jews, considering them "unfit" for union organization. As the number of Jewish carpenters and painters increased, however, their competitive pressure in the labor market forced the unions to admit them. At first, they were given a second class status, but gradually they established locals of their own and, in the painters' union at least, the Jewish workers became the dominant group in the New York area. Factional strife has rent this union no less than those in the needle trades. The balance of power has been vacillating between Communists and non-Communists. In 1947 the anti-Communists won the elections in the New York District Council and have since then retained control.

#### XI. GENERAL ACTIVITIES OF JEWISH LABOR

In addition to the labor unions and the Socialist parties there have always been a number of workers' organizations in the United States that have been neither functional nor political yet contributed greatly to the social and general progress of the Jewish labor masses.

The most important among these "peripheral" organizations have been the "fraternal orders" of the workers. The oldest and strongest of these has been the *Arbeiter Ring*, the Workmen's Circle.

A. *The Workmen's Circle*: The Workmen's Circle was organized in New York in 1892. At that time many Jewish fraternal societies, or orders, were already in existence, but were usually dominated by businessmen and middle-class people, most of them of German origin. When the influx of emigrants from Eastern Europe brought large numbers of Russian, Galician and Romanian Jews to the United States, the new arrivals found it difficult to fit themselves into the existing organizations and soon formed a society of their own—the Workmen's Circle. The chief purpose of this new organization was, on the one hand, to serve as a club where people of common background might meet, and, on the other, to provide mutual aid especially in cases of sickness or death. Gradually, the scope of the Workmen's Circle's functions expanded. The spread of tuberculosis among Jewish workers, who often worked in small, dark shops and lived in unhygienic slum dwellings, prompted the Workmen's Circle to set up at Liberty, N. Y., its own sanatorium which in time became one of the best in the country.

However, from the very outset, the Workmen's Circle was built upon broader foundations than mere practical assistance to its members. Most members of the Workmen's Circle were people with a revolutionary and socialist background in the old country. Since its day of organization, the Workmen's Circle has included in its "Declaration of Principles" a point which makes it obligatory for each member to belong to a labor union and support the labor movement. Strike-breakers were barred from the Workmen's Circle. This resolution has been enforced in regard to individuals, as well as to the Workmen's Circle membership as a whole. It has actively participated in building trade unions, by giving them both moral and material support. In their turn, the growth of the trade union movement and the emergence of the Jewish Socialist press (*The Forverts*), greatly furthered the development of the Workmen's Circle. Thus permanent contacts and mutual inter-

action were established between the entire Jewish labor movement and the Workmen's Circle. The latter was to become an important factor in the Jewish and general American labor movement and gradually extended its influence to Jewish social life both in America and in Europe. At every convention of the Workmen's Circle, large sums have been appropriated (subject to approval by general membership referendum) for assistance to a great variety of institutions and causes in America and Europe. The aggregate sum of these contributions for the past 18 years exceeds a million dollars.

During the period following the First World War, the Workmen's Circle engaged in a new activity. The growing cultural estrangement between the immigrants and their American-born or American-educated children created the problem of building a bridge between parents and children. In order to give the young generation some understanding of both Jewishness and Socialism, the Workmen's Circle entered the broad educational field: it has built a network of special schools for the children of its members (cf pp. 144-150). Further expansion of Workmen's Circle activities resulted in the formation of women's branches and of young people's English-speaking branches.

For a time the split in the entire labor movement which was caused by the struggle between Communists and Socialists, strongly affected also the Workmen's Circle. However, the organization overcame the difficulties and emerged from the internal struggle almost unimpaired.

In the various cities and towns of the United States and Canada, the Workmen's Circle in 1948 had 713 branches with a total membership of some 70,000 men and women.

B. *The Jewish National Workers' Alliance*: As the Workmen's Circle has gradually become a rallying point mainly for Socialists of the Bundist trend, the Zionists were not excluded but they have often felt

lonesome and handicapped in the *Arbeiter Ring*. Looking for an organization of their own which would serve their specific political aims just as the Workmen's Circle in its majority served the Bundist cause, they formed The Jewish National Workers' Alliance (Yidish Natsionaler Arbeter Farband) in June, 1910, at a convention in Rochester, N. Y. Two years of preparatory work followed, and the new organization managed to obtain a charter and hold its first regular convention (December, 1912—January, 1913).

The purpose of the Alliance was to provide mutual help for its members, to give them and their children a "national" education, to support all efforts of national liberation and rebirth of the Jewish people. Newly-admitted members had to pledge allegiance to the ideal of a Jewish Palestine.

The new organization grew fast. In 1911 it had 1,000 members; in 1913, 2,000; in 1921, at its seventh convention in Toronto, Canada, the Jewish National Workers' Alliance reported 114 branches, with a total of 6,471 members, in existence.

In 1918 and again 1924 negotiations were conducted aiming at a possible merger between the Workmen's Circle and the Alliance. But all efforts along this line failed.

By 1928 the membership of the Alliance had risen to 8,000. In 1936 the number of members was over 10,000; in 1938, over 14,000; in 1943, 18,522; and in 1944, 22,873.

The activities of the Alliance have been manifold and in most ways similar to those of the Workmen's Circle. They cover mutual aid, sick benefits, funeral assistance, medical care, special schools for the national education of the members' children (See above, pp. 144-150), special English-speaking branches for the youth, political action on special occasions, and so on. A characteristic feature of this organization has been its activity in promoting Zionism, and particularly the Jewish labor movement in Palestine. In 1923-24 it organized the so-called *Geverkshaften-kampein* (National Labor Committee for Palestine), a committee of Jewish trade unions in this country

dedicated to raising funds for the Histadrut, the leading trade union organization, and its affiliated organizations in Palestine. This committee proved to be a highly successful fundraiser. In 1931, the League for the Working Palestine was founded by the Alliance.

#### C. *The Jewish Peoples Fraternal Order:*

It was only logical that the Jewish Communists followed the example of the democratic Socialists, both the non-Zionist and the Zionist, and establish a fraternal order of their own. This took place in 1930, when the International Workers' Order was established under Communist leadership. This International Order had a Jewish section, which later assumed the name of the Jewish Peoples Fraternal Order of the International Workers Order. Duplicating in its activities the Workmen's Circle and the Jewish National Workers' Alliance, this organization claimed a membership of 57,000 in 1948.

#### D. *The Jewish Labor Committee:*

The Jewish Labor Committee is of more recent origin. It came into being at a moment when Jewish Socialists in the United States were becoming conscious of the grave danger in which the rise of Hitlerism in Germany had placed the Jewish people and the labor movement as a whole.

At the end of 1933, a provisional committee was formed under the leadership of B. Charney Vladeck. On February 25, 1934, a conference was called in New York, with the participation of over 1,000 delegates, representing the Workmen's Circle, the United Hebrew Trades, the Jewish Socialist Farband, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, the *Forverts* Association, the Poale Zion and the Jewish National Workers' Alliance. The conference decided to establish "The Jewish Labor Committee" and adopted a program of activities. One of its aims was to convey to the Jewish and American communities a concept of the menace of Nazism not only for the Jews but also for the general Social-

ist and liberal movement; to obtain the community's wholehearted support for the groups struggling against Hitlerism; and to give moral and material aid to all socialist, liberal and labor forces persecuted by the Nazis or combatting Hitlerism.

A motion was adopted providing that no group affiliated with the Jewish Labor Committee could at the same time be affiliated with any other general organization set up for the same purpose. As a result of this, the Rightist Poale Zionists who were affiliated with the American Jewish Congress withdrew from the Labor Committee.

As its first activity, the J.L.C. embarked on a campaign for the boycott of German goods. It further engaged in propaganda campaigns designed to arouse public opinion and bring to the Government's attention not only the atrocities being committed in Nazi Germany but also the pogroms in fascist Latvia and reactionary Poland. In 1934 it initiated drives for "Labor Chests"—general labor organizations, including both gentile and Jewish workers, to provide aid to labor abroad.

In 1936, at the initiative of the J.L.C., the American Federation of Labor organized a Committee for the Victims of Nazism and Fascism.

In 1937, the J.L.C. cooperated with the American Federation of Labor in setting up the Labor League for Human Rights.

In 1940, after the collapse of France in the war against Hitler, the entire emphasis of the J.L.C.'s work shifted to aid for those in Europe who found themselves imperiled by the Nazis. A rescue campaign was started and succeeded in saving a number of political refugees from Nazi occupied areas.

Upon the personal intervention of President of A.F. of L. William Green, the United States Government cooperated with the rescue campaign, by granting visitor visas to persons persecuted by the Nazis. The Jewish Labor Committee played a leading part in aiding the escape of these

persons to neutral or allied territory. In all, several thousand persons were saved by it during the war.

In cooperation with certain of the European leaders who had been saved from Hitler thanks to the Jewish Labor Committee a Council of Representatives of the Underground Labor Movement was established in New York, which provided liaison between the J.L.C., the American Federation of Labor, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, and the underground labor movements in Europe. It furnished ways and means for the transmission of aid—financial, material and military—to partisans, underground groups, and to the Jewish ghetto groups in Poland.

With the close of the war, the attention of the J.L.C. turned towards measures to aid child care, reconstruction, rehabilitation, and cultural activities of surviving European Jewish workers and other folk: the J.L.C. financed 80 producers' co-operatives, and shipped a million dollars' worth of clothing, food and medical supplies abroad. It has sponsored children's schools, adult education courses, libraries and Jewish cultural clubs in Western Europe and in the camps of Germany, Austria and Italy.

The Committee has stood for the free immigration of Jews into, and unrestricted land purchase in Palestine and in opposition to the "White Paper." In cooperation with the Workmen's Circle, it is building a medical center in the Negeb area of Israel and has also decided, in cooperation with the Histadrut, to erect the Abraham Liesin People's House in Tel Aviv.

This activity of the Jewish Labor Committee parallels the work of the above-mentioned National Labor Committee for Palestine. Thus Jewish labor leaders divided on many other issues and even on Zionism as a philosophy, have found a common ground and unity of purpose in their practical activity for Israel's labor.

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